

# AFRICAN STUDIES

(Formerly Bantu Studies)

VOLUME 17, No. 1, 1958

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## AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO A STUDY OF ZANDE SOCIETY

E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD

### SYNOPSIS

*The political institutions of the Azande people of Central Africa cannot adequately be understood unless their history during the past century or so is known, at any rate in outline, for it was a time of, for them, momentous happenings. Fortunately, it has been recorded by a number of writers, particularly de Calonne-Beaufaict, but in such detail and in so complicated a manner that it is very difficult and probably also unrewarding for students of Africa to attempt to read them. In this article a selection has been made from this voluminous and tangled material to present, as far as is possible, a simplified and less factually-weighted picture of an historical situation in which some of the more significant features of the political life of the Azande can be stressed. Even when this has been done, the picture is still highly complicated. That can in no way be avoided; and it is furthermore one of the main purposes of the article to emphasize precisely this very great complexity of the tangle of political relations and events and of peoples and personalities which form the background of Zande political institutions as Europeans found them when they first began to take over Zandeland and to administer it. What happened in the past cannot, it is true, be understood without a knowledge of these institutions, but it is also true that such understanding as we are able to have of these institutions is due to our knowledge of the more distant past as well as to anthropological studies of the more recent past.*

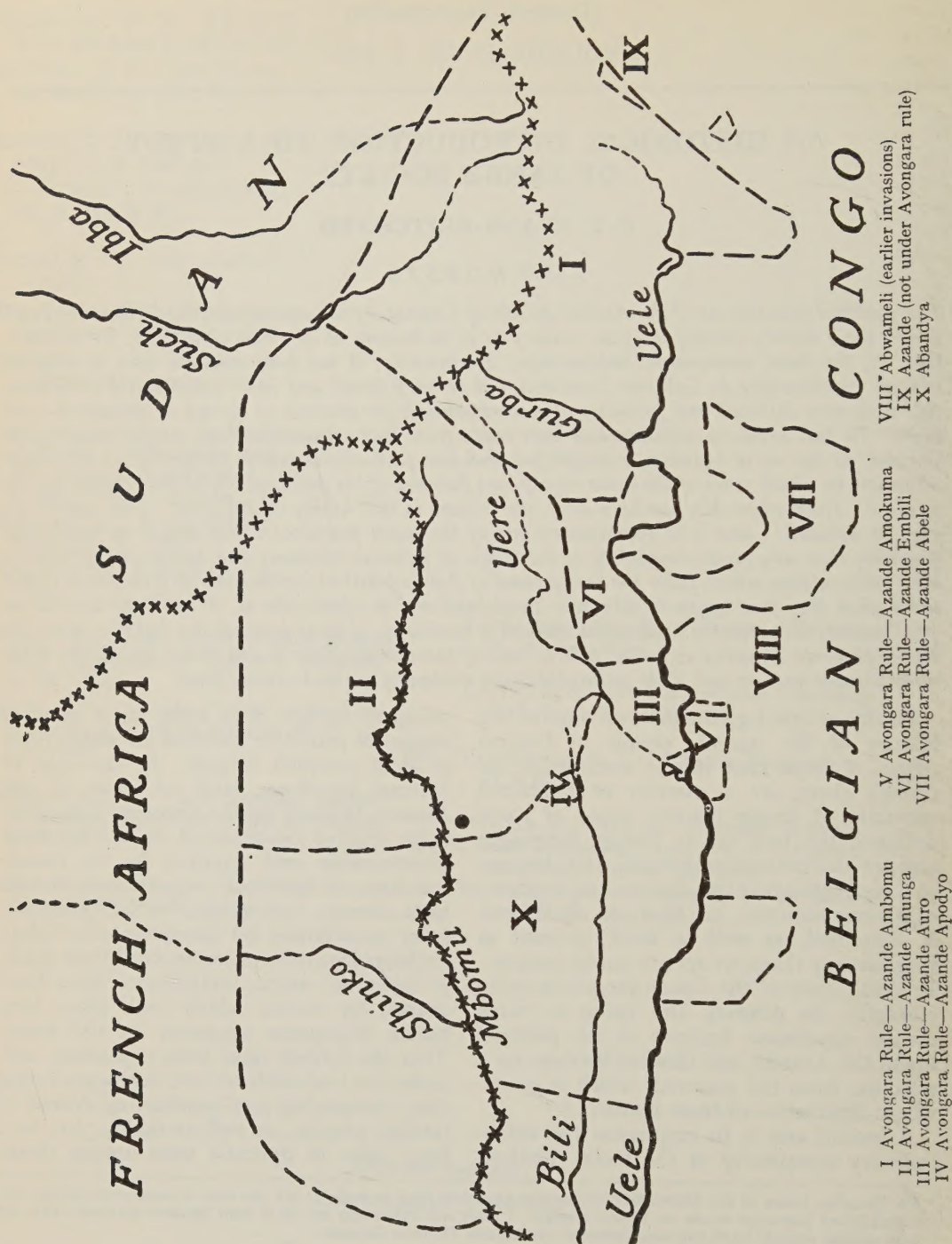
In this article I give a brief account of the history of the Azande people of Central Africa. I think that this is worthwhile, for though there are a number of published accounts of Zande history, some of them detailed, the best are in foreign languages and are also posthumous works, and they are so complicated that few, even among students of African societies, are likely to read them. A simplified, as well as brief, account in English may therefore serve a useful purpose. It treats some of the Zande kingdoms quite cursorily, its primary aim being to mark certain significant features of the political life of the Azande, and this can be done by a selection from the material, which is everywhere illustrative of these features.<sup>1</sup>

A second aim is to emphasize the extraordinary complexity of the facts. Anthro-

pological theory often rests on a basis of studies of primitive societies for which there is little recorded history. In the case of African kingdoms, such as those of the Azande, to leave out the historical dimension is to deprive ourselves of knowledge both ascertainable and required for an understanding of political organizations which have always, to a greater or lesser extent, been transformed by European rule before anthropologists have commenced their study of them and which, furthermore, have been shaped by events which took place long before Europeans appeared on the scene. That the Azande have been expanding and, under the leadership of their Avongara ruling clan, conquering and assimilating dozens of foreign peoples, as well as taking part in a long series of dynastic wars among them-

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Douglas Jones of the University of London has been kind enough to let me read a somewhat similar and unpublished paper he wrote on Zande history. I have not made any use of it here because we both draw our information mainly from the same sources, principally from de Calonne.





selves, for 150 years before Europeans imposed their administrations is surely a fact which cannot be left out of consideration in a study of their institutions and culture.

For the earliest periods of Zande history we have to rely on native traditions but these are supplemented by travellers' reports from 1858 to 1884, when the routes to Zandeland were closed by the Mahdist insurrection in the Sudan. In 1891 Belgian military patrols reached Zande country from the Congo and European records of events were resumed. What historical value is to be credited to the native traditions? I have recently published in *Zaire*<sup>1</sup> notes on the history of the Zande kingdom of Gbudwe, situated in what used to be the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. King Gbudwe reigned from about 1868 to 1905, and the account Azande gives of his relations during this period with other Zande kings, with Arab traders, with the Egyptian Government, with the Dervishes, and with European forces is in no important particular contradicted by the accounts of the travellers and the first European administrators. On the contrary, where the literary records are not silent they confirm Zande statements. Since this is so, we may lend greater credence to Zande traditions about earlier periods of their history than we might otherwise be inclined to do, especially when current tradition is supported by what Azande of past times told travellers, for if what I was told in 1928 can be proved to have been in general a true account of political events for as far back as sixty to seventy years, then we may have equal confidence in what was related to Schweinfurth, Junker, Casati, and others about earlier periods. If what I was told in 1928 was substantially correct for more than 60 years back, so what Junker was told by Azande in 1877 may be assumed to be a true record of events as far back as the first decades of the 19th century. The princes I met might have had little knowledge of the events which took place in the reigns of their great-grandfathers, but at least they

knew about happenings in the time of their fathers and could be trusted to provide some information about the people of their grandfathers' days; and it was doubtless the same in the time of Junker, who was able to talk to the sons and brothers of some of the leading figures in the earliest period of Zande history recorded here. For example, in 1880 and on the water-parting between the Uere and the Gurba, where formerly stood the residence of King Yakpati, he met and discussed Zande history with Yakpati's two surviving sons, whose names he gives as Gallia or Balia and Malingde or Bunza;<sup>2</sup> and to the south of the Uele he discussed Zande history also with Kipa's brother Bagbili, "a tall robust figure, advanced in years, with a full long white beard".<sup>3</sup> Even as late as 1914 Vanden Plas was able to discuss historical topics with Kipa's nephew Gei.<sup>4</sup>

Now the testimony of all true Azande—those of Mbomu stock—is that their homeland was to the west of its present extension, and more precisely on the lower Mbomu and Shinko rivers. Azande told me this between 1927 and 1930, they told it to Hutereau and de Calonne at the beginning of the century, and they told it twenty years before that to Junker, who relates that the original Zande territory, some five generations before his explorations, lay on the lower course of the Mbomu and reached eastwards and southwards to the Uere confluence.<sup>5</sup> From this region they migrated under their Avongara rulers south-eastwards across the Uere river, and from there north, south, and east, conquering vast territories. When did this migration begin? Azande were unanimous, in my day, in the days of Hutereau and de Calonne, and in Junker's day, that it began in the reign of Ngura and was extended by his sons and their descendants. We cannot, of course, date its commencement with any certainty, but we know that Bazingbi died about 1867 and that both he and his father Yakpati had long reigns and were aged when they died, so we cannot be far wrong when

<sup>1</sup> *Zaire*, from May, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Junker, *Travels in Africa during the Years 1879-1883*, 1891, pp. 182 and 185.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1892, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> C. R. Lagae and V. H. Vanden Plas, *La Langue des Azande*, Vol. 1, 1921, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1892, pp. 31-32.



we conclude that the Azande must have started their migrations round about the middle of the 18th century.

Azande can give a fairly clear account of the main course of their history from the time of the sons of Tombo and Mabenge. Before that, the information they provide is sparse and has already become mixed with legendary tales that go beyond the credible. Indeed, some legend may have crept into later periods: de Calonne met many men who had known Junker and declared that they had seen him appear simultaneously in different places and cross rivers on small sticks;<sup>1</sup> but Junker was a remarkable phenomenon and certainly one outside Zande experience, and the fact that they credit him with miraculous feats need not weaken our faith in their historical traditions as a whole. I commence this essay at the point at which these are adequate and, we have good reason to suppose, also reliable, leaving for future consideration what can be reconstructed from interpretation of legend and from ethnological analysis.

My own information was gathered among those Azande who were subjects of the sons of Yakpati's grandson Gbudwe and, to a lesser degree, of his grandson Wando, and it is limited to this branch of the royal house of the Avongara, for Azande seldom know anything of the history of branches other than the one they serve. Schweinfurth noted this fact: "I was not long, however, in discovering that these Zandeh (Niam-niam), although possessing such uniformity in speech and customs, had no more knowledge of the remote parts of their country than the majority of the other natives of Central Africa. I may mention, as an instance of this, that no one in this district (the eastern part of Wando's kingdom) knew so much as the name of Mofio (Mukpoi), whose territory indeed was 300 miles distant, but whose reputation, as one of the chief Niam-niam princes, might have been presumed to be widespread".<sup>2</sup> Consequently, in tracing the history of the Zande kingdoms other than

those ruled over by descendants of Yakpati, and even of these kingdoms for the most part, I have been obliged to rely on the researches of other students, and especially on de Calonne's account. He and Hutereau were able to consult an older generation of Azande than those I met, and they traversed country far to the west of that part of Zandeland with which I was acquainted; and it was in those regions that took place many of the events of Zande history, and all the earliest events. This is an important point for it is probably the case, as de Calonne says, that historical events are associated with the places where they took place and tend not to be retained in the memories of those concerned in them if they have migrated from these places: "The collection of verbal tradition is not transported in migrations, but remains fixed, so to speak, to the place where the historical event took place, even if the region is today occupied by populations of a different origin. Of a thousand (sic!) Avungura interrogated, not one was able to give circumstantial details about the wars engaged in by Gura (Ngura), their illustrious eponym, at the time of his crossing the M'Bomu. 'It is over there, to the west towards Gufuru and Bangaso.' In that region, now in the heart of the Abandya territories, details pour out. Similarly, the Abarambo, entirely ignorant of their own migration before their crossing of the Uele, were nevertheless able to supply information about the events of the Azande-Abele migration, events which took place in present day Abarambo country. On the other hand, the Abele who remained to the north of the Bambili were totally ignorant of the journey of their brothers who set out towards the east, but they were explicit on the subject of the Abarambo prior to the crossing of this people to the south of the Uele. Mangbetu events have in this way been precisely stated by Avungura tradition, facts concerning the Avungura by the Bakango, etc."<sup>3</sup> Reconstructed Zande history, especially in its early periods, is therefore a mosaic of pieces of tradition collected where the events

<sup>1</sup> A. de Calonne-Beaufaict, *Azande*, 1921, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, 1873, vol. 1, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.



took place here and there over an enormous (from a pedestrian's point of view) territory.

The result is a complicated presentation of events in terms of innumerable names of peoples, persons, and rivers, the last because Azande define places in relation to rivers. And these peoples, persons, and rivers are little more than names. We are told, for example, that Renzi son of Yakpati was killed fighting the Amadi people on the Mazugburu, tributary of the Sueh, but we know almost nothing about Renzi beyond his name, little about the Amadi beyond their name, nor, if we have not seen it, of the Mazugburu stream beyond its name. Nor do we know anything about the battle beyond that there is said to have been one and that it took place on the Mazugburu and that Renzi was killed in it. In this instance we are fortunate in at least having been told that Renzi was the son of Yakpati son of Mabenge, for there are any number of persons in the Vongara genealogy named Renzi, as there are persons called Mange, Ndukpe, Nunga, Rikita, and by other names; and what adds to the confusion is that many individuals had several names. We are fortunate also in being able to fix the location, at least approximately, of the stream, because not only was its name given but also the name of the river into which it flows. We are not always so fortunate, as de Calonne laments: "A certain event took place over there, far away, towards the west, on the Salanga.' There are thirty Salanga, and as many Nambia, Malanga, Lingasi, etc., and it is altogether exceptional that people can tell you 'the Salanga, tributary of the M'Buye, tributary of the M'Bomu'." <sup>1</sup> Altogether exceptional, de Calonne means, when speaking of a stream in a territory with which the speaker is not personally familiar. Then, even when adequate information is given, one may not find the names on maps. A history of events concerning individuals, peoples, and places about whom nothing much beyond their names is known can scarcely be more than a Dryasdust recital of these names in a sequence which at best tells us what have been the movements of

persons or peoples on a map; and it is true, as I have said, that the histories of de Calonne and Hutereau are almost unreadable.

For the order of events we have to rely on the genealogy of the royal house of the Avongara. As this genealogy is very well known as far back of Ngura to both nobles and commoners and is supported by literary evidences, we possess an adequate chronology, though it cannot provide us with more than a very rough means of dating events in years—only in reigns. This manner of reckoning historical time in terms of reigns is, of course, bound up with the political structure of the Azande, and the periods designated by the names of kings will be different for different kingdoms. Azande commoners reckon only in terms of the royal genealogy and not also in terms of their own genealogies. They do not have lineage descent groups which might give them alternative, or additional, chronological tables—it is seldom that one meets a commoner who can tell you who his great-grandfather was—and though they have clans these are widely dispersed groups and without either myth or history of their own.

Zande historical traditions are supported by literary evidences. These vary greatly in value and, though I do not intend to estimate the value of all these sources here, some indication of the relative importance of our main authorities may be given. Of those who visited parts of Zandeland or its confines before 1884—Petherick, Piaggia, Miani, Potagos, Schweinfurth, Junker, Casati, Schnitzer (Emin Pasha), Marno, Chaillé Long—the most important sources for historical information are Schweinfurth, Junker, and Casati, and particularly the two last, because Schweinfurth saw only the most easternly part of Zandeland, for a period of only a few weeks (in 1870), and in what were for the most part disadvantageous circumstances. Casati covered wide tracts of Zande country from 1881 to 1884, but he tends sometimes to write sensationallly, and, as he lost all his notes when imprisoned by King Kabarega in Uganda, he had to write from memory. Junker gives us the most detailed account of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



Zande politics and of their historical traditions, which he took great pains to inquire into. He visited most parts of Zande country, meeting most of the kings and princes of the time (from 1877 to 1884), he lived in close contact with the people, and, though he made mistakes, he was an assiduous and honest recorder.

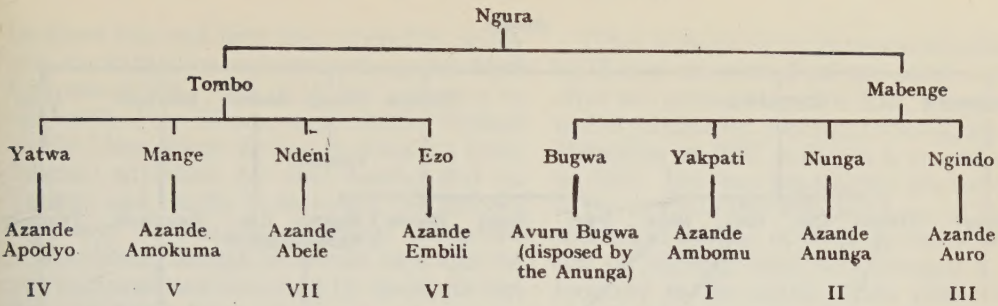
Most of our knowledge of Zande history is, however, derived from authorities who conducted their inquiries after 1891, principally from two men, Hutereau and de Calonne. Armand Hutereau, a career soldier, served the État Indépendant du Congo, mostly in the region of the Uele, from 1896-1909. He had always interested himself in the history and customs of the African peoples among whom he served, and in 1909 he published his *Notes sur la vie familiale et juridique de quelques populations du Congo Belge*. In 1911-1912 he undertook, on behalf of the Minister for the Colonies, an ethnographical mission to the Congo. He then returned to military duties and was killed, fighting with great gallantry, by German forces in 1914. His *Histoire des Peuplades de l'Uele et de l'Ubangi*, which contains a detailed account of Zande history, was published posthumously in 1922. Our other main authority is Adolphe de Calonne-Beaufaict, a Belgian administrator in the Uele region from 1905 till his death in 1915. He, also, was deeply interested in the peoples of this region and had already to his credit books on the Ababua and the Bakongo peoples when he devoted himself to an intensive study of the Azande. It is most unfortunate that he died before he had completed his labours and before he had published any of his material. In his posthumous work *Azande* (1921) his editor, Col. Bertrand, gives it as his opinion that a great part of his notes were lost after his death, and this would seem to be confirmed by the table of contents at the end of the book in which he presents a plan for a general ethnographic treatise on the Azande. All that was found, however, were the notes, in every stage of development, which Col. Bertrand put together to form *Azande*, and some linguistic material which has not, as far as I can discover, been published. I have also consulted

for this paper Jan Czekanowski's *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo Zwischengebiet* (1924), the outcome of an expedition to Zandeland in 1907-1908, and P. V. H. Vanden Plas's introduction to the volumes written by Mgr. C. R. Lagae and himself (*La Langue des Azande*, 1921-1922). These two Dominican Fathers spent many years in that part of Zande country which lies in the Belgian Congo, and they had the advantage of knowing the Zande language. I think it is evident that none of the other authors whose writings I have mentioned knew it. It will be noted that the books which constitute our principal sources, those of Hutereau, de Calonne, and Vanden Plas, all appeared in 1921 and 1922 and may therefore be regarded as independent authorities.

In this account I followed Calonne unless it is stated otherwise. I do this for three reasons. First, because any one account is confusing enough, and to try to piece together every scrap of information in all the different accounts would make for such obscurity that such few general features as I wish to emphasize would be lost in a mass of intractable detail. Secondly, because de Calonne's account of Zande history, if not as full as Hutereau's, gives all the information required to bring these features into relief. Thirdly, because in all important respects his account is also confirmed by Hutereau and other writers.

The distribution of the various branches of the Zande royal house of the Avongara at the time French, Belgian, and Anglo-Egyptian forces took over and partitioned Zandeland early in the century is shown in de Calonne's map, a simplified version of which is reproduced here. These branches are all descended from two sons of Ngura: Tombo and Mabenge. Tombo was born on the Fué, tributary of the Shinko and was assassinated between the sources of the Mbili and the Bitakpo by his rebellious son Banzunguru (de Calonne says on another page that it was his son Yatwa). Mabenge was born on the Sere, tributary of the Shinko, and was assassinated on the Bugutandi, tributary of the Api-Uere, by Mako, his father's brother's son. The genealogy below shows the branches





which established themselves as rulers in the areas differentiated in de Calonne's map (to which the numbers refer).

Not all the sons of persons in the above genealogy may have been recorded, but certainly all those whose descendants made their mark in Zande history are recorded, and what tradition says of the sons of Tombo and Mabenge and of the descendants of these sons may readily be accepted, for it is supported by literary evidences. Junker and Casati were able, as we have noted, to talk with some of the sons of the founders of the dynasties figured in the genealogy, and the first European administrators with some of their grandsons. I propose now to relate in outline the fortunes of the two dynasties who rule the two largest parts of Zandeland—those de Calonne calls the Anunga and the Ambomu—ruled over by the descendants of Nunga and Yakpati. This will suffice for our purpose; and the other dynasties are referred to only very briefly.

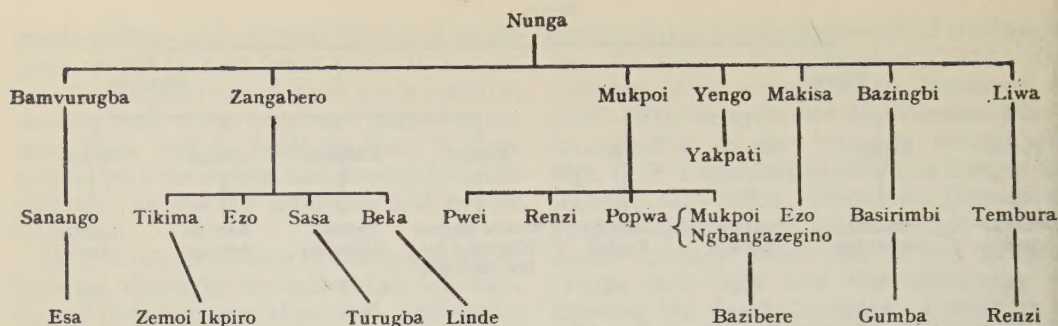
The subjects of the descendants of Nunga are known as Avuru Nunga, the subjects of Nunga, or, according to de Calonne, the Anunga, the Nunga folk. For their history we have not only the sources I have mentioned but also a typescript report written in 1911 by Bimbashi E. S. Stevenson of the 9th Sudanese and the Gloucestershire Regiment and at the time Acting Inspector of Tembura District in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Nunga, de Calonne relates, passed to the north of the Mbomu with a small fol-

lowing, some Azande and some Abangbinda people. He did not conquer a large territory—some Abarambo territory, some Basiri territory and some territory of the Apambia people. It was his sons who built up the fortunes of the dynasty, especially Zangabero,<sup>1</sup> the father of Tikima, and Bamvurugba, the father of Sanango (Schweinfurth's Solongoh). When Nunga died, four of his sons divided his kingdom among themselves: Bamvurugba's heritage was to the east, towards the present post of Tembura; Makisa's was between the Gara and a line situated to the west of the Duru (it was bounded to the south-east by the kingdom of Ezo son of Bazingbi); Yengo's was on the Mbomu to the south-west of the last; and Zangabero's was to the west of Yengo's.

Liwa ruled a domain under the authority of his elder brother Bamvurugba, but on the suzerain's death he refused to recognize the authority of his son Sanango and emigrated with his followers to the east. At this point the Arab slavers and traders, and later the Egyptian Government, began to play a role in this western part of Zandeland. Sanango called in the Arabs to assist him, and Liwa was defeated, captured, and put to death with all but two of his sons, Tembura and Gadi, who were led away captives by the Arabs. After Sanango's death, the Arabs released these two youths, who, with Arab aid, attacked and killed Esa, Sanango's heir; and Tembura took his territories as well as those his father Liwa had conquered during

<sup>1</sup> I have used my own spelling in writing Zande names when it appears to me to be evident how the names should be spelt. When the names are unfamiliar or their construction is not apparent, I have followed Vanden Plas where he has recorded them, but where, in such cases, he has not recorded them I have been obliged to use the spellings of de Calonne, whose ignorance of the language often led him astray in the hearing and recording of Zande words.





his lifetime. Yengo and Makisa had frequent quarrels, in the course of which Yengo was wounded and taken prisoner. Makisa was also attacked by Sanango. Finally Makisa attacked Ezo son of Bazingbi of the dynasty of Yakpati. The history of the house of Nunga, like that of other Zande royal houses, is a chronicle of internecine warfare and assassinations. These dynastic struggles became fiercer and are more difficult to follow when armed bands of Zubeir's Arabs appeared on the scene as a dominant political influence in the generation of Nunga's grandsons. However, even in the generation of his sons, Junker tells us, intercourse and commercial relations had already been established with itinerant Arab traders from Dar Fur.<sup>1</sup>

Mukpoi son of Nunga ruled a district in the territory of his brother Zangabero, on whose death he refused to recognize the authority of his son Tikima, though he accepted that of Tikima's son Zemai Ikpiro, with whom he made exchange of blood. Shortly afterwards he died, killed, Hutereau reports his sons as declaring, by the treacherous Zemai's sorcery.<sup>2</sup> Of his sons, Pwei had openly revolted against him and had been killed; and some of the others, led by Renzi, now fled from the Arabs assisting Tikima and took refuge with Makisa. Then the Arabs, led by Rafai, the lieutenant of Zubeir the slaver, installed in the old territory of Mukpoi, turned against Tikima and drove him to the west and continued their advance to the south and attacked Makisa, whose people fled to the country of Ndoruma son

of Ezo of the Yakpati dynasty. Later Popwa made his submission to the Arabs and, aided by them, attacked Ndoruma, with whom he had quarrelled, and drove him towards the south-east. At the same time the Arab bands attacked Yengo and killed him. Ezo son of Makisa and Yakpati son of Yengo now followed Popwa's example and submitted to the Arabs and were re-installed in their conquered territories: Yakpati between the Dume and the Mbomu, Ezo in part of the old territories of Makisa, to the north of the Mbomu. Popwa was installed near Yakpati, but, finding his region unfertile, aided by his brother Mukpoi Ngbangazegino, he attacked Ezo, who defeated him. At this point the "Agadia", Egyptian Government troops, intervened, attacked the partly Arabized Zande princes, put Popwa, Ezo, and Esa to flight, made Ezo prisoner, and killed Esa, replacing him by Tembura son of Liwa. This must have been after 1880, for Gessi records that Esa, whom he calls Tissa, was still reigning in that year, and Junker visited his country (he calls him Yissa) in the same year.<sup>3</sup> Mukpoi Ngbangazegino replaced Popwa and became preponderant in the at-one-time territory of Makisa. We hear no more of Popwa, who was later killed by the Dervishes on the Tangalia, tributary of the Mbomu.

In the meantime another power, Zemai Ikpiro, was forming towards the north-west. We have seen that on the death of Zangabero, Mukpoi son of Nunga refused to recognize the authority of Tikima. Tikima's own

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1892, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Romolo Gessi Pasha, *Seven Years in the Sudan*, 1892, p. 374; Junker, *op. cit.*, 1891, p. 118.



brothers Ezo and Sasa also refused to recognize his authority and revolted against him. Ezo was killed. Sasa took his followers to the south of the Mbomu and installed himself on the Uere, where he was in Junker's time. Tikima, attacked by the Arabs, fled to Yengo; and finally he recrossed the Mbomu and, says de Calonne, probably submitted to the Arabs, though Hutereau says that he was captured and executed by them, his son Zemoi holding his uncle Sasa's sorcery responsible for his father's death.<sup>1</sup> It was this Zemoi who acquired a preponderance in the whole region. He possessed a great number of rifles, most of them given to him by Lupton Bey, then Governor of the Bahr al-Ghazal province, in 1883.<sup>2</sup> Through the power and prestige which accrued to him on account of them he attracted a numerous following. The two powers, Mukpoi Ngbangazegino and Zemoi clashed, and Zemoi inflicted a bloody defeat on Mukpoi, who then turned south, crossed the Mbomu, and established himself to the south of the Uere.

At this time (round about 1885) the Avuru Nunga, the subjects of (the descendants of) Nunga, were grouped into five kingdoms: those of Tembura, Mukpoi, Yakpati, Sasa, and Zemoi. These were the reigning kings of the house of Nunga at the time Junker was in Zandeland in the early eighteen-eighties, and he has left us interesting descriptions of some of them. I give a short account of their fortunes, following de Calonne. Yakpati was captured somewhere between 1892 and 1896 and put to death on the orders of Sasa, who took his territories and put them under the dominion of his son Turugba. Sasa, who had been brought up by his elder brother Tikima, had, as we have noted, revolted against him and had crossed the Mbomu to install himself on the Uere. Attacked by Tikima and then by the Arabs of Rafai, he appealed for help to the Egyptian Governor of the Bahr al-Ghazal. He later fought many battles, chiefly with the Azande Embili, who followed Mange, son of Tombo, son of Ngura. He was finally overcome by the Belgians in 1911 and 1912, was captured and deported.

When Mukpoi Ngbangazegino was defeated by Zemoi he retired to the south. Zemoi, after his return from the Nile, to which he had accompanied a Belgian force against the Dervishes in 1897, inflicted a second defeat on him. He then abandoned his territories to the north of the Mbomu to one of his sons and asked asylum of Badinde son of Bugwa son of Mabenge who had retained a small territory to the south of the Uere. Mopoi installed himself in it and then assassinated his host. Then the death of Mbili son of Malingindo son of Bazingbi and dissensions among his successors gave him an opportunity to seize part of Mbili's heritage. He also attacked and defeated Badinde's brother Palambata, who sought refuge with Zemoi. Mukpoi continued to worry all his neighbours till, in 1911, the Belgians forced him to flee to his old territories to the north of the Mbomu, where, in 1915, he rebelled against the French, who shot him in a fight.

When Zemoi had driven Mukpoi to the south of the Mbomu he sought to conquer new territories. He crossed the Uere, defeating or subjugating all on his way, and he then continued his march to the south, crossed the Uele and, turning to the east, he subdued the Ababua people. Eventually, on the arrival of the Europeans, he retired to the banks of the Mbomu, leaving two of his sons as governors between the Uele and the Mbomu. He then accompanied Van Kerckhoven's expedition to the Nile and afterwards, as we have noted, again defeated Mukpoi Ngbangazegino, on the right bank of the Mbomu, and took from him the greater part of his northern territories. However, in the end, alarmed by the Belgian advances, he retired to the French Congo in 1910, taking part of his population with him.

Of the five rulers of the five kingdoms of the house of Nunga the only one who seems to have had, after his boyhood adventures, a moderately peaceful life was Tembura. When in February 1896 M. Liotard, representing the French Government, arrived at his court he was welcomed by the king, and a French

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202; also Junker, *op. cit.*, 1891, p. 98.



post was established in his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> When the French withdrew, he equally welcomed Anglo-Egyptian forces. In his old age he drank so heavily as to be considered incapable of ruling, and in 1911 his son Renzi was put in charge of his kingdom.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1914.

The last son of Nunga shown in the genealogy whose fortunes we have to follow is Bazingbi. Nunga sent him against the Basiri people on the Kere, by whom he was killed. Zangabero avenged his death but took his territories between the Kere and the Mboku and gave them to his own son Beka, who brought up Bazingbi's son Basirimbi. When this lad grew up he fled to the Arabs, then to Sasa, then to Tembura, and finally to Zemoi, in whose prisons he finished a life of intrigue.

If I have recorded so much detail as to make the brief account I have given of the fortunes of the house of Nunga stodgy and unpalatable I have left out much of the detail given by our authorities; and such detail as has been recorded has been presented partly so that the reader can appreciate the complexity of Zande history. Each kingdom has its own history, and it is a tangled one. Kings and princes pursued their ways amid long successions of wars, revolts, and assassinations. Hardly a prominent person died a natural death. Liwa and all his sons but two were put to death by his nephew Sanango. Esa was killed by Tembura. Yengo was killed by the Arab slavers, Popwa by the Dervishes, Tikima by the slavers. Ezo was killed in fighting his brother Tikima. Yakpati was executed by Sasa. Sasa was deported by the Belgians, Mukpoi Ngbangazegino assassinated his host Badinde and was himself later shot by the French. Bazingbi was killed by the Basiri people and his son Basirimbi died in Zemoi's prisons. And while these dynastic wars and wars with Arabs and Europeans were going on, new territories were being conquered and their inhabitants dispersed or brought into subjection, each new conquest adding to the ethnic confusion. Only a few of these peoples have been mentioned: Abangbinda, Abaram-

bo, Basiri, Apambia, and Ababua. There were many more, even in the restricted area of Zandeland ruled over by the house of Nunga: Akare, Mbegumba, Mberidi, Huma, Basiri, Golo, etc. The ethnic and cultural complexity resulting in the Zande kingdoms is too large and involved a topic to be treated here. And while kings battled with each other and murdered their rivals and conquered and subjugated foreign neighbours there appeared on the scene, especially in the western kingdoms of the house of Nunga, the Arabs. They brought some of the Zande kingdoms into dependence on themselves and were drawn into Zande dynastic quarrels, turning them to their own advantage; and not one lot of Arabs but three, the slavers and traders, the forces of the Egyptian Government, and the Dervishes, all struggling among themselves as well; and in the south even a fourth lot, the Zanzibar Arab slavers. This clearly is also a subject requiring special treatment. Finally the Europeans appear on the scene; and here again not one lot but three, French, Belgians, and British (Anglo-Egyptian); and they, whilst fighting the Dervishes and Zanzibar Arabs, as well as keeping a watchful, jealous eye on one another, also sought to subdue the Azande and to exploit dynastic rivalries to this end; and the Zande kings tried to use both them and the Arabs to advance their own interests. This also, whilst being part of Zande history requiring separate treatment, is furthermore part of the history of colonial expansion and of international history of the 19th and 20th centuries.

A similar situation existed in varying degrees and forms in the kingdoms to the east of those I have been discussing, and a second example should be sketched to show that this is the case. The Ambomu are so called because they came originally from the Mbomu river. They are the true Azande, in contrast to the peoples they, under the leadership of the Avongara, have subjugated and who have taken over their language and institutions. Most of the Ambomu followed the fortunes of Yakpati and his descendants,

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Egyptian Handbook Series 1—The Bahr El Ghazal Province*, 1911, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Sudan Intelligence Report* No. 210, 1912.

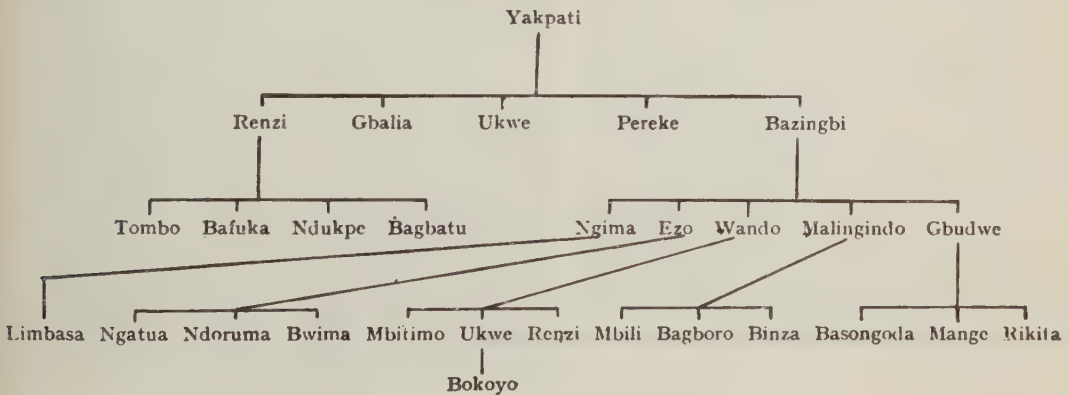


and it is only in territories ruled over by Yakpati's heirs today that they are found in any numbers; and it is presumably for this reason that the inhabitants of these territories are known among Azande of other regions, as would appear from de Calonne's account to be the case, as Ambomu. In the area itself, however, the word does not refer to the entire population but only to those of true Ambomu stock in contrast to assimilated elements. This distinction between true Ambomu and assimilated foreigners may not be made in other parts of Zandeland. The details of the history of the dynasty of Yakpati are as complicated as those of the house of Nunga, and I have again omitted much of what de Calonne and Hutereau have recorded and, in this case, much of the considerable detail I recorded myself.

Yakpati was first installed on the Dume, tributary of the Uere, and he died on the Sueh. My own information is that his last court was at the junction of the Birasi and the Sueh and that he died on his way to repress a rebellion on the part of his son Ngindo and was buried on a small hill near the Magibitiki, tributary of the Ngomo, tributary of the Sueh. He and his sons conquered vast territories. His son Renzi, especially, was a famous warrior, who with his brothers and sons fought the Amadi, the Abangbinda, the Amiangba, the Abuguru, the Abaka, the Adio, and the Kakwa. He was killed—Azande say as a consequence of his father's curse on account of an insult—fighting the Amadi on the Mazugburu,

tributary of the Sueh. His son Tombo or Bazugba sought to avenge his father but was also killed, on the Roi, tributary of the Sueh. Another son, Ndukpe, led his followers as far to the south-east as the Gangu, tributary of the Dungu, where he and very many of them died of plague (I was told, of famine). Azande told me that two other of Renzi's sons, Bafuka and Bagbatu, were killed in the fighting, which must have been very fierce, between Renzi's Azande and these foreign peoples especially the Amadi and their allies the Amiangba. The enormous territory conquered by Renzi, which stretched to far east of the Ibba, passed, I was told, at his death and the deaths of his older sons to Ngangi, the son of his brother Muduba (also, de Calonne says, killed in fighting the Amadi), and to several of his brothers, Gbalia, Ukwé, Pereke, and others. All of these princes were eventually ousted either by Bazingbi's sons Gbudwe and Wando or by the Arab traders. The last of Renzi's line to have retained any authority seems to have been Gbate son of Tombo, who, Azande told me, allied himself to some Arab band to overcome the resistance of the Amadi but eventually had to flee for refuge to Wando's son Renzi, who put him to death.

Bazingbi's position became much stronger after the death of Renzi, and eventually the entire heritage of Yakpati and of his other sons passed to his heirs. He was on the Salanga, tributary of the Uere to the east of the Hoko. His neighbour Bugwa son of Mabenge quarrelled with him and killed two





sons of his son Wando and the mother of Wando's eldest son Mbitimo. Bazingbi attacked him, put him to flight, and killed his son Bali. Dynastic fights were rampant. Bazingbi also fought Kipa son of Ndeni, and his son Wando was constantly at war with princes of the house of Nunga. Bazingbi recalled Wando and placed him on the Dungu, tributary of the Gurba, and put another son, Malingindo to the west of the Gurba (where he fought with Wando), and he placed his son Ezo near the present post of Doruma.

As I have recorded much of the more recent history of Bazingbi's descendants in *Zaire*, I give here only a brief summary of de Calonne's account. Bazingbi died on the Naguse, tributary of the Sueh, killed, it is believed, by the medicines of his eldest son Ngima, whom he had disinherited. Ngima sought to take his father's kingdom but was captured and mutilated by his brother Ezo. His son Limbasa avenged the indignity he had suffered by slaying Ezo. Gbudwe, or Sukangi, overcame and killed Limbasa—I was told that Limbasa was murdered by Renzi son of Wando and Ngima by Ndoruma son of Ezo—whose people then submitted. Bazingbi had in his lifetime divided his kingdom between Ezo, Wando, and Malingindo; and Gbudwe now took over the country his father had retained in his own possession.

Ezo extended his domains by seizing part of the territories of Makisa of the house of Nunga. On his death Ndoruma became predominant among his sons. I was told that his territory was to the west of the Beki and that his brother Ngatua ruled to the east of that river and down to the Uere. Ndoruma defeated the Arab traders but was finally compelled to submit to the Egyptian Government. In 1896 he overwhelmed a Belgian column but was severely defeated by another column in the same year. His son Mvuto got Bazia son of Malingindo to assassinate his uncle Bwima and placed his own son Zemoui in Bwima's territory. In 1910 the Belgians deported Zemoui. Mvuto mur-

dered three other uncles besides Bwima.<sup>1</sup>

Wando subjugated the Amiangba of the Kapili and the Duru, the Abuguru on the tributaries of the same rivers, the Amadi on the Nambia (Mayawa), the Abaka of the Aka and the Garamba, and he then attacked the Bangba. I may add that he fought wars with his brothers Malingindo and Gbudwe and, I believe, the sons of Ezo also. Wando divided his kingdom during his lifetime among his sons Mbitimo, Ukwe, and Renzi. Mbitimo made an agreement with an Egyptian force to punish the Mabisanga people to the south of the Uele for the destruction of an Arab column, and he installed himself in their territory as their ruler in 1883. Renzi and Ukwe in the northern part of Wando's territory were at daggers drawn, and Ukwe was in addition in rebellion against his father, as we know from the writings of Dr Junker, who tried to heal the breach between them in 1880.<sup>2</sup> Renzi allied himself to the Egyptians and later to the Mahdists; so Ukwe allied himself to the Belgians soon after they appeared on the scene in 1891. Renzi's brother Bafuka, to whom he had delegated the administration of his northern provinces, destroyed in 1894 a Belgian column but shortly afterwards both brothers submitted to the Belgians and Bafuka accompanied Chaltin in his march against the Mahdists at Rejaf in 1897, while Renzi aided Gérard to suppress the revolt of his nephew Bokoyo in 1898.

Malingindo in his lifetime divided his kingdom among his sons: Mbili on the Gurba, Bagboro on the Bwembi-Gurba, Binza on the Bafuka-Doruma route, Limbasa on the Buere, Tikima on the Dundu, Gbudwe on the Mangbwaru, tributary of the Buere. On his death Mbili took precedence and fought his nephews. In 1894 he massacred a Belgian column but was defeated by another two years later. On his death his son Tikima succeeded him, but he and his nephew, Migida, were attacked and killed by the people of Mukpoi Ngbangazegino of the house of Nunga. Mbili's brother Bazia then attempted to obtain predominance and

<sup>1</sup> Hutereau, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1891, p. 276.



harassed Kana, another brother. In the end the Belgians deported him.

When Gbudwe obtained Bazingbi's personal domains to the west of the Yubo he set about subjecting the last remaining descendants of Renzi. As I have recorded in *Zaire*, he also defeated Ngangi son of Muduba and annexed his kingdom to the east of the Sueh; and the kingdom of Tombo son of Yakpati between the Sueh and the Ibba also fell into his hands after Tombo's death. Gbudwe's sons, especially Mange to the east of the Sueh and Rikita to the north of that river, waged war on foreign peoples—the Abuguru, the Baka, the Moro, the Bongo, etc. Mange's warriors advanced as far eastwards as Makarakaland, to the east of the Nam or Rohl river, and in 1904 they were raiding the Jur peoples as far northwards as the post of Rumbek. It was only the coming of the Europeans that stopped the farther extension of Gbudwe's domains. Gbudwe and his sons were constantly at war with his brother Wando and Wando's son Renzi. Like Ndoruma, Gbudwe defeated the Arab caravans and drove them from his kingdom, but, also like Ndoruma, he had, after two bloody campaigns, to submit to the Egyptian Government, aided by Ndoruma, which imprisoned him for two years. He later fought a successful campaign against the Dervishes. Finally, he suffered severe losses in an attack on a Belgian fort on the Mayawa in 1904 and in the following year he was shot by a British patrol and died of wounds. His eldest sons, Basongoda and Mange were suspected of plotting a revolt against the Anglo-Egyptian administration in 1914, were arrested, and died in exile.

Some of the facts concerning the house of Yakpati have been presented in a highly condensed form as further illustration of the appalling confusion of the times. Whole peoples were raided and uprooted or passed under the Zande yoke: Amadi, Amiangba, Abuguru, Abaka, Adio, Bangba, Kakua, Mabisanga, Moro, Bongo, Jur, etc., a score of different peoples. There were the same ceaseless struggles between kings and princes,

who stopped at nothing to attain their ends. Gbudwe, Ngangi, Malingindo, Wando, Ndoruma, the scions of the house of Nunga, etc. fought one another. Yakpati's son Ngindo rebelled against him and his son Renzi was in almost open revolt too. Bazingbi disinherited his son Ngima. Ukwe was in revolt against his father Wando. And there is the same history of murder and violent death. Renzi and his sons and nephews were killed by the Amadi. Bugwa killed two sons of Wando. Bazingbi killed one of Bugwa's sons. Renzi executed Gbate. Ngima was mutilated by Ezo and later murdered by Ndoruma. Limbasa slew Ezo. It is an endless story of bloodshed, of slayings and treachery. Well may Mgr. Lagae ask "Of how many murders of their kin have not the Avongara been responsible?"<sup>1</sup> Added to these rivalries and wars and murders among the Azande themselves were, as in the case of the house of Nunga, the intervention of the Arab traders, each company jealous of the others and all opposed to the Egyptian Government, which also sought to impose its rule over the Zande kingdoms, until it was itself overthrown by the Mahdists, whose columns also entered the Zande countries seeking to subjugate the inhabitants and adding further confusion. Then finally the Belgians from the south and the British from the north entered the domains of the dynasty of Yakpati both to destroy the Mahdists and to impose their rule on the Azande, each striving to get as much of the country as they could, and as quickly as possible, into their possession; and they added their quota of destruction—war, killings, executions, and deportations. The history of the other Zande dynasties is much the same story, so I shall do scarcely more than mention them.

Bugwa son of Mabenge installed himself to the south of the Uere at the expense of the Amiangba people. His descendants were replaced by the house of Nunga. Both his son Badinde and his grand-nephew Palembata "had been more or less brought into subjection by Zemio [Zemoi]" by 1880<sup>2</sup>, and Badinde, as we have earlier noted, was later

<sup>1</sup> Mgr. C. R. Lagae, O.P. *Les Azande ou Niam-niam*, 1926, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Junker, *op. cit.*, 1891, pp. 199–200.



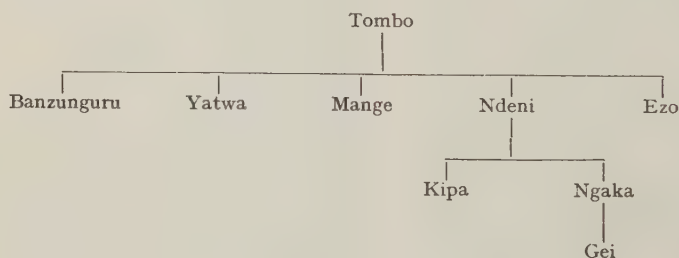
assassinated by Mukpoi Ngbangazegino, who took his remaining territories. The heirs of Ngindo son of Mabenge rule the Azande called Auro, who live in the triangle Uele-Uere, with a fraction of them to the south of the Uele. The term 'Auro' has the sense of 'easterner' and therefore of 'foreigner' and in a later sense of 'Azande not of true Ambomu stock'; but it seems to have become the name for this political conglomeration, probably because it consisted almost entirely of people originally of foreign stock. When Ngindo died, his son Bazigba refused to accept the authority of his elder brother Nzongo but was defeated by him in war.

We have so far been following the fortunes of the sons of Mabenge who conquered to the north and east. It remains to say a few words about the line of Tombo, Mabenge's brother, whose wars were with the Abandya on the western frontier of Zandeland and with the descendants of Ngindo son of Mabenge, and whose conquests were to the south and south-east and also later than those of the descendants of Mabenge. Tombo, as we have earlier noted, was assassinated by one of his sons near the sources of the Mbili. His son Ezo led his people across the Api-Uere on their march towards the east. They were for a time on the Mbili, where they acquired the sobriquet 'Embili' ('Ambili'). Another small group ruled over by Tombo's descendants are the Amokuma, at the confluence of the Uele and the Uere and between the left bank of the Uele and the Bima. Their royal family is the line of Tombo's son Mange. Another small group, the Apodyo were ruled by the line of Tombo's son Yatwa until they

lost almost all their possessions to Sasa of the house of Nunga. The final political group ruled by descendants of Tombo are the Abele or Avuru Kipa, those of the forest or the subjects of Kipa. A dissident group of Embili (Ambili) took the name Abele when they followed Ndeni, who had quarrelled with his brother Ezo, and departed for the south, attacking the Ababua people and carving out a domain in their country. The story of this man and his remarkable son Kipa, who died in 1868,<sup>1</sup> and Kipa's children runs true to type. It is a story of bitter quarrels and violence.

It is not necessary here to say anything of the three final groups shown in de Calonne's map, the Abandya, Adio, and Abwameli, for though the Abandya have taken over Zande speech and institutions, they are ruled over by an aristocracy other than that of the Avongara, and a discussion of them in the present place would add further complications to an already over-complicated picture of events; and though the Adio and the Abwameli also speak Zande today they have no ruling clans.

From this resumé of events certain salient features stand out in the politico-historical situation. Firstly, there was the political and cultural assimilation of a large number of foreign peoples conquered by the Avongara-Ambomu which brought about, but only by degrees and over a long period of time, a homogeneous society and culture. Secondly, there was a complex political structure in which kingdom was balanced against kingdom and within each kingdom there were provincial rivalries which on the death of a king, or even before his death, led invariably



<sup>1</sup> Schweinfurth, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 56.



to the disintegration of the kingdom until one or other of the princes gained mastery, or it became divided among two or more princes who then fought each other for dominance and survival. Thirdly, there was the part played within this political pattern by intrusive elements, Arabs and Europeans, with a more powerful organization and superior equipment which more than compensated for their having to operate from distant bases. These topics require separate treatment. All that is intended in this essay is to give the reader a picture of events sufficient to enable him to appreciate their complexity and to understand how the study of an African kingdom, and all the more of several kingdoms, is a much more difficult and complicated task than the study of politically less developed societies in which there is little historical tradition and for the history of which there are only scanty documentary evidences. The complexity, indeed confusion, in the case of the Azande was not of short span or duration. It was spread over a vast area, and in different parts

of it different circumstances prevailed, so that it is well-nigh impossible to write a history of the Azande, but only separate histories of each kingdom. If we take 1905 to be the year in which European rule was finally established in Zandeland, there had been European contacts for 47 years before that date. It is today just 100 years since the first European contact with the Azande. Arab contacts began at about the same time as European contacts, probably somewhat earlier in parts of Zandeland; and they influenced the Azande far more, since the Arabs who entered Zande country were far more numerous and were more firmly rooted in it than the handful of transient European travellers who penetrated it. But before even Arab or European arrived in Central Africa the Avongara-Ambömu had been moving for a century east, south, and north, conquering great territories and subjugating their inhabitants. It is against this background that their institutions and culture have to be examined if they are to be well understood. We cannot ignore it.

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#### AUSTRALIAN BRANCH, ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

An Australian Branch of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the British Commonwealth has been founded. Professor J. A. Barnes, who is well known to Africanists for his study of the Fort Jameson Ngoni of Northern Rhodesia (*Politics in a Changing Society*, 1954), was elected Chairman of the Branch. Professor Barnes, until recently Professor of Anthropology in the University of Sydney, has been appointed to succeed the late Professor S. F. Nadel as Professor of Anthropology and Sociology in the Australian National University, Canberra.

The inaugural meeting of the Branch, held in Canberra on 29 September, 1956, was

devoted to four papers on Political Systems of Highland New Guinea. A second meeting was held in Sydney on 27 and 28 May, 1957, when three more papers were read, and it was decided to issue an annual Newsletter, reporting the research and other activities of members, and of Departments of Anthropology in Australia. The first issue of the Newsletter appeared in November, 1957. The address of the Secretary of the Australian Branch of Social Anthropologists is:

Department of Anthropology & Sociology,  
Australian National University,  
Box 4, G.P.O.,  
Canberra, A.C.T., Australia.



# THE ATTAINMENT OF ADULT STATUS AMONG THE MOUNT FRERE BHACA

W. D. HAMMOND-TOOKE

## SYNOPSIS

*In this study the transition from childhood to full tribal membership is discussed.*

*Although circumcision appears to have been part of original (i.e. Natalian) Bhaca culture, the practice has fallen into disuse today and, generally speaking, there are no special rites that mark the attainment of manhood among boys. However, the phenomenon of its re-adoption, mainly due to Hlubi influence, is noted.*

*Girls, on the other hand, should pass through a special ceremony (umnguzo, umgubho, ipati) on reaching physical maturity. The typical Christianized ceremony, as practised today, is described, with references to traditional practices.*

The Bhaca referred to in this paper are a Nguni people numbering about 56,000 persons who inhabit the 684 square miles of the district of Mount Frere, East Griqualand<sup>1</sup>. Their settlement in their present territory is fairly recent and, although their culture is today of Cape Nguni type, they are very conscious of their Natal origins. Before Tshaka's rise to power and the imposition of Zulu language and culture on the numerous tribes and clans which inhabited Natal at the beginning of the 19th century, the Bhaca appear to have belonged to the Lala group of tribes, of distinctive dialect and culture. In c. 1820 they were forced to flee before the Zulu armies and, after many vicissitudes including a sojourn under the Mpondo chief, Faku, finally settled in the mountainous uplands of Mount Frere district. They combine hoe-culture with pastoralism and are divided into two independent tribes under related chiefs. The ethnic composition is not homogeneous and there are concentrations of non-Bhaca, mainly Hlubi and Xesibe, all of whom, however, acknowledge the Bhaca chiefs. A fairly large Bhaca population is found in the district of Umzimkhulu, East Griqualand, and the senior section occupies a few locations in the Ixopo and Bulwer districts of Natal. These latter were studied by Kohler.<sup>2</sup>

As among all South African Bantu tribes, full participation in tribal life, with its attendant rights and obligations, is only attained on physical maturity. Among the Bhaca, however, there exist initiation rites for girls only and, generally speaking, the transition from childhood to adulthood is not granted the social recognition that it is among some of the southern Transkeian tribes, e.g. Xhosa, Thembu, Mfengu and Bomvana.

Today the Bhaca do not practise circumcision, although there is evidence that they did so formerly, informants stating that it fell into disuse during the troubled period when the great chief Madzikane led his people out of Natal. This earlier observance of circumcision is endorsed by Kohler who, writing of the Bhaca of southern Natal (Bulwer), states that, although not practised today, circumcision was a feature of early Bhaca culture. He quotes the following from Natal informants (p. 10):

"When boys have arrived at the age of *ukutomba* (commencement of puberty) they go out into the hills and stay there, their food being brought out to their hut by their respective mothers. Then they cut off the skin that envelopes the glans penis so that the latter becomes visible and make an incision thereon (*uhlanga*). The mother of each

<sup>1</sup> The material presented in this article was collected in Mount Frere in 1949, during field investigations financed by a grant from the National Council for Social Research. Further research was carried out among the Bhaca in February, 1955. Population figures are based on estimates calculated from the 1951 Census returns.

<sup>2</sup> M. Kohler, *Marriage customs in southern Natal*, Ethnol. Publ. No. 4, 1933. A short account of the history and present culture of the Mount Frere Bhaca will be found in the writer's *Tribes of the Mount Frere District*, Ethnol. Publ. No. 33, Dept. of Native Affairs.



lad takes food to her son until the *ukusoka* period is over. It is on account of this that the AmaBhaca wear a penis-box (*iqoyi*) to cover the glans . . ."

The nearby Khuze are reported to have no circumcision and a boy, on the morning after his first nocturnal emission, merely drives his father's cattle early to the river and washes himself downstream from the place where they are drinking. Some Mount Frere informants describe such a washing but evidence is conflicting on this point. Although there is no circumcision as such today among the Natal Bhaca, Kohler states that men still slit the frenulum or cut it off with a horse hair as a hygienic measure and wear a penis sheath, either carved out of wood or made of the cocoon of the bagworm (*umahamanendlwane*, *Acanthopsyche junodi*). Mount Frere Bhaca, especially of the older generation, also wear a penis sheath (*incitsho*), often under European-type trousers, for without it "it is as if you are naked". It is made variously from soft goatskin, the cocoon of a caterpillar, carved from the hollow fruit of the *umthombothi* tree or from woven grass.

Although today one occasionally meets informants who maintain that Bhaca boys are circumcised, one finds on investigation that these are cases in which either one of the parents is a Hlubi or where there is Hlubi influence. In the two locations under Hlubi headmen, Kinira and Ncome, elaborate initiation ceremonies are held annually at which large numbers of boys are circumcised at one time, with a lengthy seclusion period "up the mountain", the killing of many cattle, the observance of rigid food taboos and the imparting of sex instruction. The operation is performed by experts (*iinchibi*) and the whole ceremony is still an important and vigorous element of social life. The influence of these Hlubi puberty rites appears to be extending to the Bhaca and every year an increasing number of youths joins the lodges, usually held at Sithana and Lady Kok in the Liyengweni range. This is particularly the case in areas close to the Hlubi locations. In 1948 twenty Bhaca youths went from Mandileni to the mountains and a fair number go yearly both from there and from

Qwidlana and Cancele. The reason for this adoption of custom is apparently not, as some informants suggest, that girls of circumcising tribes despise uncircumcised men, considering them 'boys'. To ascertain whether there was any reluctance on the part of Hlubi women to marrying Bhaca men, I made an analysis of 78 marriages at Mhlotsheni, a location remote from Hlubi influence, and found that 24% were contracted between Bhaca men and Hlubi women. 'On the other hand Xhosa and Thembu girls are very fastidious in this regard. There is evidence that this spreading of the custom to tribes who do not at present practise it, e.g. Bhaca and Mpondo, is a fairly general phenomenon in the Transkei. In Pondoland an increasing number is submitting to the operation at mission hospitals, and Mpondo students at Fort Hare and Lovedale (in a Xhosa area) frequently return home circumcised. The scorn of the girls is an important factor here, however.

In the absence of formalized *rites de passage*, the only thing that marks the transition to adulthood among the Bhaca is a period spent working on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand or the Free State, the coal mines of Natal (to a much lesser extent) or, increasingly, in one of the major urban areas of the Union. The dangers and hardships of mining life provide a test of a youth's manhood and the added sophistication and wealth enhance his attractiveness in feminine eyes. Yet not all youths leave the reserve—some go to school or college while others obtain work with traders or in the village—and in effect there is therefore no formal initiation into adulthood.

All Bhaca girls, however, at the time of their first menstruation should go through a special ceremony which marks the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Two terms are today used to describe this rite, viz, *umngquzo* and *umgubho*. The original term is probably *umngquzo* (c.f. Zulu *ingquza*, the vagina, and the Mpondo *umgquzo* or ritual dance performed at the analogous *-thombisa* ceremonies). The word *umgubho* refers more especially to the feasting and dancing at the end of the seclusion period and is used by

Christians who wish to make a distinction between the traditional pagan rites and the modified form of the ceremony practised by them. Indeed today, with the majority of Bhaca nominally Christian or at least 'dressed' (estimated at about 80%) the original ceremony has undergone considerable modification and the common term in use is *ipati* (Eng. 'party') which stresses even more definitely the break with heathendom! As informants say, 'We call it *ipati* because we no longer do it as it used to be done. We just buy bread, make *ijiki* (beer) and kill an ox'. 'The *ipati* is like the Europeans' twenty-first birthday'. It is thus only in an attenuated form that the custom is observed today.

Not all girls go through the ceremony but it is believed that one who does not might become thin and sickly. Samente, employed at the store, maintained that this could be proved by reference to his own family as his sister, who had never been through the rites, was very thin and often ill. Sickness is considered to be a sign that the ancestral spirits wish the rites to be observed and on one occasion I attended the *ipati* of Mavumbuka's sister, aged about twenty-two years and married with a small child. Although, correctly speaking, the ceremony should coincide with the physical change it does not always do so and, as we have seen, may be postponed until after marriage. There are no initiation ceremonies for girls on a tribal scale and each girl must undergo the rites at her father's kraal. Twin girls are initiated together.

'When she begins to menstruate a girl keeps quiet and, when asked the reason for this, begins to cry. By this the mother knows that her daughter's periods have begun and immediately the people present at the *umti* (kraal) begin singing'. Or, 'Sometimes, when girls go out together to gather firewood, one of the girls will begin to menstruate. She will say, "What has happened?", and an older girl will say, "*Utfombile*", that is, "You have reached womanhood"'. The word *-tfomba* means to bud, to sprout, to menstruate for the first time. *Hlonipha* words used in this context are, *ukuya exesheni*

(lit. to go to one's time) or *ukuya enyangeni* (to go to one's month (moon)). 'When they arrive home the girl will take the bundle from her head and run crying into her hut, for when you have that thing you must cry. When her mother asks her the reason for her tears she refuses to tell her and just cries. Her mother will thereupon make enquiries from the girls who have been with her and they will tell her what has occurred. Her girl friends will then go into her hut and start singing: "*Yihoyehi! Ye kunomangakhe na: uya hoya ubelilela abantfu bakhe!*" Everyone is very glad'.

As soon as the father of the girl hears the singing he sends a small boy into the veld to drive the goats into their kraal, for this is an indirect way of informing him what has happened. Informants say that formerly there was always a rush on the part of the boys of the family to get the goats as the one who drove them in would be allocated the *ikhazi* cattle received from the husband's people on the marriage of the girl. They should thus ideally be fetched by a uterine brother.

From the time that the girl enters the hut she is known as *umulakhube* or *umtfombi* and, while the goats are being fetched, she sits with her back to the doorway and does not speak. Formerly she was placed behind a mat screen (*isikhuselo*) made from *incembe* grass, so placed that a small space was partitioned off at the back of the hut. This room is called an *umgongo* and is seldom seen today. Word is also sent to the girls of the location, who will come each day to help stamp and grind maize for the feast to be held on the final day, and who cut the special rush, *umkhanzi*, with which to strew the hut floor. The girl remains in the hut throughout the seclusion period with one or two close friends to accompany her and is not supposed to be seen by anyone, particularly by males. In practice, however, this is not always rigidly enforced. Young men laughingly said that attempts were sometimes made to tease the girls by lifting the screen, but Makabikitshi, an elderly woman who overheard them, was horrified at the idea and said that if any young man



had approached her while she was undergoing the ceremony she would have hit at him with a switch. Today there appears to be a much greater laxity in the observance of these seclusion rules, and, at the ceremonies which I attended, they were practically not enforced at all.

When the goats which have been sent for arrive they are driven into their kraal and one is selected by the kraal head and brought into the initiate's hut. He addresses his daughter with the words, 'Here is your *umhlonyane*'. The goat is thereupon returned to the stock kraal and stabbed by the father with the special spear kept in all kraals for ritual killings. All this time the *umulakhube* remains behind her screen, covered with a blanket. The *imbetfu* (Xh. *intsonyama*, of special ritual significance) is cut off, roasted lightly and given to her. She receives it with crossed arms, nibbles at it and spits it out. Some informants state that she does not actually swallow the meat but others maintain that she does, and also that she partakes of some of the other meat: 'It is impossible not to enjoy things on your special day'. No one is allowed to eat the meat of the *umhlonyane* until the initiate has tasted the *imbetfu* but after this is done the goat is roasted, beer is drunk and the whole neighbourhood is merry. The clotted blood (*ubendze*) is collected in a basin and eaten as a great delicacy. Some of the gall is then given to the initiate to sip after which some is smeared on her body by her paternal grandmother, or, if she is not present, by any other old woman of the kraal standing in that classificatory relationship to her.

The following days are spent in preparations for the feast to be held on the last day of the ceremony. Each afternoon the young people of the location gather and, after the stamping blocks used for preparing stamped mealies for the feast have been removed from the store hut, dancing and the 'calling' (*-bhita*) of the girls continue far into the night. Small cakes of *umkhupha* bread are made by the girls for refreshment, but are not eaten by the initiate, and, if the ceremony takes place in late summer, her friends will go into the fields and gather bundles of *imfe* (sweet

reed). There is always plenty of beer and *marewu* (fermented gruel) for the refreshment of visitors.

Throughout this time the initiate should remain in the hut. Among the pagans and some Christians she is enveloped in a blanket during the whole seclusion period but today this is relaxed among the great majority. She is well fed as 'she must have a good complexion when she comes out', but she must not touch *amasi* (sour milk). If she does so it is believed that her blood will become 'thick', and other informants say that the cattle, too, will be affected, becoming sick and perhaps dying. In place of *amasi* she eats a thick liquid dish called *umcuko* consisting of ground cooked maize mixed with beer.

On the sixth or seventh day after entering the hut the initiate rises early in the morning and, with her close friends among the girls of the location, runs down to the river clad only in the short, bead *isikhakha* or skirt. There they wash and return to the kraal wearing blankets until they can dress in their best clothes or, among the pagans, in all the finery of their beadwork. While they are at the river the *umkhanzi* grass which was strewn on the floor of the seclusion hut is removed by the girls and burnt, a final break with the seclusion period and the old life of childhood. The initiate is now said to be *vutshhiwe* (ripe) and to be looking her best. Often ointment, bought at the store, is smeared on her face to lighten her complexion and the enforced inactivity has probably made her plump. On this final day the *umgubho* proper begins: it is often also referred to as the *umjadu* or feast. After the return of the girls from the river the kraal head kills three of four head of cattle for meat. Usually his brother will contribute one 'to help him', but this is not obligatory. The promise of meat attracts neighbours and relatives and, generally speaking, the *ipati* is an important and eagerly-looked-forward-to social occasion. At some I attended there were between 200 and 300 people present many of whom had brought gifts for the girl. Beer-drinking, dancing and feasting are the order of the day and social

intercourse is marked by much hilarity and good humour. The concentration of young people, however, often gives rise to faction fights between the members of the *indlavini* gangs belonging to different areas, usually having their genesis in rivalry for the affections of the girls.

As after all milk taboos, e.g. after a miscarriage, premature birth, etc., a special goat must be slaughtered by the girl's father to mark the cessation of the period of ritual impurity, during which she was not allowed to drink sour milk, and the return to normal life. The Bhaca call this goat the *udlisw'intusi* (lit. 'to cause milk to be eaten') and this killing appears to be analogous to the *ukwemula* custom practised by the Natal Bhaca and described by Kohler (p. 14). He interprets *ukwemula* as essentially the celebration of a female's return from a state of taboo to normal life.

As most of the Mount Frere Bhaca are today 'dressed' and members of one or other of the many churches in the district, the modified *ipati* described above is the form of initiation most frequently encountered today. It is stated, however, that formerly the initiate emerged from the seclusion hut at the end of the period dressed in the long goatskin skirt of a married woman, holding a spear, and wearing the twisted fat of the *umhloniyane* in a coil round her neck.<sup>1</sup> The

gall bladder (*inyongo*) of the goat was fastened to her arm and informants state that she and her female companions, also holding spears, performed a special dance in the *inkundla* (space between the cattle kraal and huts). The wearing of the married woman's skirt would seem to be symbolic of the newly acquired marriageable quality of the girl and to emphasize to the society generally her attainment of physical maturity. It is significant, though, that in practice there is not necessarily any co-incidence of physical maturity with the social recognition of this state. Formerly also, on the final day of the ceremony, the initiate shaved her head, except for a tuft in front, smeared her face with ochre and fastened the gall bladders of the cattle killed for the feast to her arms with strips of plaited *umkhanzi* rush. Her two assistants wore plaited ropes across the breasts but not the gall bladders. One rarely finds this done today.

Initiation is the preparation of the girl for marriage, an indication to the society that she has become a woman and an adult member of the tribe. There is no organized sex instruction apart from injunctions to be careful in playing with boys. Although even the modified form of *ipati* is frowned on by the missions it is certain that the great majority of Christians allow their daughters to undergo this important *rite de passage*.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Some African Poison Plants and Medicines of Northern Rhodesia.** W. GILGES. Occasional Paper No. 11, Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, Livingstone. 1955. 33 pp. 2s.

This little pamphlet is a valuable primary record of some of the poison plants and medicines of the Africans more particularly among the Luvala and other tribes in Northern Rhodesia.

The author has been well-known to the reviewer for many years as an enthusiastic student of nature and man. This is admirably reflected in this brochure which makes available in many instances information on the toxic effects and medicinal uses of our flora not previously known. The author is to be congratulated on his effort and it is to be hoped that he will continue these studies.

J. M. WATT

<sup>1</sup> There is a distinct similarity between the initiation of a girl and that of an *isangoma* diviner, see W. D. Hammond-Tooke, The initiation of a Bhaca *isangoma* diviner, *African Studies*, 14, 1, 1955, pp. 16-22. Note the use of the *inyongo*, the tasting of the *imbetsu* of the sacrificial goat, the coils of fat worn round the neck. In both cases the initiate is 'supported' by friends.



# THE STRUCTURE, MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF EWE FISHING UNITS

ROWENA M. LAWSON

## SYNOPSIS

*Ewe fishermen have a tradition of migration. On the coast of Ghana this migration takes place in companies of up to sixty men who may live away from their homes for some eight months of the year. The coastal fishermen are noted for their skill in the operation of the beach seine net, but owing to the high cost of these nets, the migration of fishing companies depends largely on the initiative of the net owners. These are often not Ewe but Ga or Fante who employ fishermen seasonally and provided for their board and upkeep whilst they are away from home. Because of the nature of coastal fishing, the annual migration of the Ewe fishermen does not generally lead to their resettlement. In the inland fisheries however, various conditions give greater flexibility and mobility to fishing activities. The annual migration of Ewe fishermen from the Tongu district of the lower Volta frequently leads to their subsequent resettlement on the rivers of the Northern Ghana, so that many of the Tongu villages downstream are gradually becoming depopulated.*

*The coastal fishing industry is rapidly undergoing reorganization owing to the introduction of mechanized craft and modern fishing techniques. Very soon these may threaten the livelihood of the Ewe coastal fishermen. Inland fisheries however, will offer great opportunities to the Ewe, especially if a lake is created on the Volta river by damming for the Volta River Project. If this does occur, the process of the resettlement of Ewe fishermen, already well advanced in districts in the North, will be hastened and may well attract Ewe from the coastal regions.*

Since the war the struggle for tribal unification by the Ewe people who live in those territories which until recently were known as British Togoland, French Togoland and the Gold Coast, has made them internationally known. In Ghana however, they are well known for the important part they have played in the past in the development of the fishing industry. Until five years ago fishing was undertaken entirely by primitive methods in which dug-out canoes and paddles were used. Today the fishing industry is undergoing rapid changes owing to the introduction of mechanized craft in a scheme which has been sponsored by the Government. There are now 67 motor fishing vessels in operation in Ghanaian waters, all of which are owned and operated by Africans. These are all active in waters to the West of Accra so that the Ewe, who live in the East, are not yet seriously affected. Very soon however the opening of the new port at Tema will enable motor vessels to operate in waters at present entirely fished by the Ewe and this

will undoubtedly undermine their existing fishing organization. It now seems opportune to review the important part played by the Ewe in the establishment of the fishing industry in Ghana in the past fifty years.

Before the 20th century the activities of Ewe fishermen were probably confined to the coastal waters lying between the mouth of the river Volta and the Dahomey frontier. When trade with Britain increased at the end of the 19th century however, imported twine, rope and nets were introduced and this enabled the Ewe to extend their fishing activities and to spread to other areas. Prior to this fishing tackle had been locally produced, mostly from bow string hemp and pineapple. The primitive dug-out canoe, which is usually made from *wa-wa* wood in the inland forests of Ghana, is still the only craft used by the Ewe fishermen on the coast. Today Ewe fishermen may be found in operation all along the coast of Ghana and also on the river Volta and its tributaries, which together form the main river

system of the country. Apart from the coastal waters mentioned above, Ewe fishermen are also concentrated in communities in the Tongu district of the lower Volta. There are also important annual migrations of fishermen away from these two areas. From the Keta district on the coast fishermen migrate to sea fisheries lying to the West, whilst the Ewe from the Tongu district migrate northwards to the fisheries of the upper waters of the Volta and its tributaries. These annual migrations have gradually led to the resettlement of Ewe in places away from those in which they lived in the 19th century, and the most important resettlement has taken place in upper reaches of the rivers in the Northern Territories.

The Ewe fishermen are particularly noted for their skill in the manipulation of the beach seine net, but, though this method of fishing was originally undertaken entirely by the Ewe, they have, by their annual migrations, introduced it to other coastal tribes, notably the Ga and Fante.

In the past, sea fisheries have been more important than river fisheries, but owing to certain developments which are now taking place in Ghana it seems likely that the inland fisheries will become of greater importance to the Ewe in the future. Before it is possible to discuss the changes which may take place it is necessary to describe the existing fishing activities of the Ewe.

## 1. Sea fishing.

### (a) *The afafa season.*

The most important fishery in which the Ewe are concerned occurs between the months of September and December on a short stretch of coast to the East of the mouth of the Volta. During this season a species of horse mackerel, known to the Ewe as *afafa*, appears in great quantities near to the shore. The fish is caught in a large seine net known as the *afafa* net, which may be up to a mile in length and which is operated from the beach. The net is taken out to sea through heavy surf in a canoe which is paddled by thirteen men. The net is cast in a semi-circle so that the ropes attached to the wings of the net remain on the shore. These ropes are

then pulled ashore and the net captures all the fish between the two wings. During this season heavy catches may be made and single hauls of ten tons are not uncommon.

*Afafa* fishing units are organized as companies which usually consist of sixty men so that thirty men pull on each rope. The company is formed each season by the net owner who also usually owns the canoe. The day-to-day operations of the net are directed by the net owner who, if the company is working away from home, is responsible for the board and upkeep of the fishermen. The takings of the enterprise are shared in traditional proportions among the members of the company, the net owner taking half the proceeds and the remainder being shared equally among the other fishermen. When fish is landed it may be disposed of in two ways. In the first place, the fish may be shared between the fishermen when it is landed. Each fisherman may then hand over his share of the catch to a 'fish-wife'. This person is usually, though not necessarily, a wife or female relative of the fisherman's, who operates as a separate economic entity. She may either sell the fish fresh or may first process it by drying or smoking. The fish-wife retains part of the proceeds of the sale as her own profit, paying the remainder to the fisherman. Alternatively, the entire catch of fish may be handed over to women traders by the net owner, and the proceeds may then be distributed amongst the fishermen.

Some ninety companies employing between them from 5,000 to 6,000 men are engaged in *afafa* fishing during this short season. The productivity of the season varies greatly from year to year and, over the past 15 years, total catches per company have varied from 8 to 80 tons per season.<sup>1</sup> The author found, in a study made of seven *afafa* fishing companies, that the success of fishing enterprises also varied greatly from company to company. Observations of the activities of the seven companies, which were in operation in the vicinity of Keta, were recorded throughout the day over a period of 37 days at the height of what proved to be a fairly average *afafa* season. Each company spent different lengths of time on the stretches off



shore which were under observation and records could not be taken when the companies moved away from these beaches. Thus, company D was only under observation for nineteen days, whilst company A was observed for the entire period of the study.

The results of these observations are given in Tables 1 and 2 below. In Table 1 columns c, d, e, and f are calculated as percentages of the total time spent by each company under observation, taking 24 hours to the day. It must be remembered that in this tropical region there are only 12 hours of sunlight per day.

Throughout Ghana, fishermen set aside Tuesday for religious ceremonies and on this day fishermen are forbidden to land fish. When the fishing season is poor, time may be spent on religious ceremonies on other days of the week as well. Table 1 shows that, though there are differences in the amount of time spent on fishing, on the average one fifth of the day or about five hours per day are spent on fishing activities. Approximately one half of this time is spent mending nets which are easily torn in the rough surf or by large fish.

It may be seen that, when the time spent on the compulsory observance of religious

rites is included, over one third of the week is spent on activities concerned with fishing. This may be compared to working an eight-hour day, seven days of the week.

Table 2 is given to show how the earnings of fishermen vary in relation to the time spent on fishing.

The observations have been analysed to show how, taking into account the different periods spent by each company in fishing activities, the earnings per man-hour vary. The large differences shown in the end column of Table 2 reflect the instability and insecurity of the fishery. On some days good hauls were obtained within a very short time whilst on other days many hours were spent for little reward. No observations were recorded regarding the expenditure on repairs to the nets, but discussions with the net owners revealed that, during one season, sometimes half their earnings were spent on repairs. Nets form the major part of the capital cost of seine net fishing for canoes, which probably last for eight years, may cost from £70 to £100; while the large seine may cost from £1,000 to £1,500 when new, and may require seasonal repairs totalling £200. When one considers these high capital and recurring costs, together with the large

TABLE 1  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE TIME SPENT IN THE OPERATION  
OF SEVEN *AFABA* NETS NEAR KETA

a Company	b Total days under observation	c % of total time spent on fishing activities	d % of total time spent on religious activities	e % of total time when sea was too rough for fishing	f % of total time spent on volunt- ary rest
A	37	33.8	13.3	19.2	33.7
B	22	25.3	13.6	—	62.1
C	30	16.9	13.3	—	69.8
D	19	17.2	13.3	10.5	59.0
E	29	17.8	13.3	3.4	65.5
F	35	16.4	13.3	8.5	60.8
G	28	24.5	14.3	—	61.2
Average	29	21.7	14.3	5.8	58.9

TABLE 2  
THE VARIATION BETWEEN EARNINGS AND EFFORT IN THE  
OPERATION OF THE SEINE NET

Company	Total hours spent on fishing activities	Total earnings per company	Average earnings per company per hour of fishing time	Average earnings per man-hour spent on fishing
A	298	£1669	£5 10s.	1s. 10d.
B	138	209	£1 10s.	6d.
C	119	282	£2 6s.	9d.
D	75	51	17s.	3½d.
E	117	205	£1 14s.	6¾d.
F	137	940	£7 0s.	2s. 4d.
G	161	140	17.5s.	3½d.

number of man-hours involved in the operation of *afafa* nets, and also the instability of earnings, it can be appreciated that the *afafa* fishery would be highly vulnerable to the introduction of new fishing craft and techniques in which fewer men would participate and greater yields would be obtained.

(b) *Migrant coastal fishing*

The second coastal fishery in which the Ewe are noted involves them in migrations westwards especially between the months of June and the following February. Like the *afafa* fishing this is also undertaken in companies which use a seine, though the net, called in Ewe the *yevudor*, is much smaller than that used for *afafa*, being only some 200 yards in length, and costing between £300 and £500. This seine is also operated from the beach and catches a variety of fish, most of them small or fry of larger species.

These companies are organized by net owners who are usually Ga or Fante. The net owner may not necessarily be a fisherman and he may leave the day-to-day supervision of fishing to a head-man. At the beginning of the season the net owner journeys to the Keta district to employ Ewe fishermen to work for him. He may do this directly or

through a head-man with whom he may deposit £100 for distribution amongst the fishermen before they leave home. Whilst they are away the net owner is responsible for providing their food and shelter. During the season the proceeds from the sale of fish are recorded daily, sometimes by a clerk, and at the end of the season they are shared in the traditional proportions described earlier. The net owner may make small advances to the members of his company during the season, but these are deducted from each fisherman's share at the end.

Earnings in this type of fishing appear to be more stable than in *afafa* fishing. In addition to their cost of living which has been met by the net owner over a period of about eight months, the fishermen expect to take home with them sums varying from £15 to £20.

The author made a detailed study of a number of migrant Ewe fishing companies in which the nets were owned by Ga or Fante. A noticeable trend amongst such net owners is the development of the entrepreneurial function. Some net owners may own two or more seine nets and may also have capital invested in enterprises outside the fishing industry. For instance, one Ga net owner who owned two seine nets, spent very little



time supervising his fishing interests but was mostly concerned with his other businesses in road haulage and trading. Such entrepreneurs, with little occupational interest in fishing, are mostly concerned with investing their money in the most remunerative enterprises and they will probably be prepared to finance the more productive fishing units in which modern mechanized craft are used.

The development of modern fishing methods in Ghana, which are now rapidly spreading from the West, where they were first introduced, Eastwards to the Ga and Ewe waters, will thus affect the Ewe fishermen in two ways: first, by a probable withdrawing of capital from seine net fishing, and secondly, by their greater yields. Already, the operation of mechanized craft in the Takoradi district has led to drastic reductions in the beach price of fish and this constitutes a great threat to the earnings of fishermen who use primitive methods. As a means of fishing the beach seine net has many limitations, for it can be used to catch only those fish that come near to the shore. The modern motor vessels which will soon operate from the new port at Tema may enable the shoals of *afafa* to be caught out at sea where new fishing potentials may also be discovered. The new techniques will undoubtedly supersede those of the existing seine net companies forcing large numbers of Ewe to find other sources of income.

## 2. Fresh-water fisheries.

The oldest Ewe fishing communities found on the rivers of Ghana are those that lie on both banks of the lower Volta river in the Tongu district between Senchi and Tefle, that is between twenty-two and fifty-four miles of the river's mouth. It is the Ewe fishermen from this area, who, by their annual migrations upstream, have gradually developed settlements on the upper reaches of the river Volta and its tributaries the Oti, Afram and Black Volta in the Northern Territories. The local tribes of these up-river areas are not generally interested in fishing except in certain districts where

annual fish drives are held. On these occasions the whole village plunges into pools left by the drying river, and, armed with baskets, scoop nets, matchets and bows and arrows, make a general assault on the remaining fish. Some attempts are being made by the Fisheries Department to eliminate these destructive practices by teaching the local tribes, particularly the Dagomba and Kokomba how to use orthodox methods of fishing, but progress is slow as there is no tradition of fishing amongst them.

Nearly all the river fishing in Ghana is undertaken by the Ewe who emanate from the Tongu district of the lower Volta. Many of these fishermen now live in permanent settlements upstream which have been developed by a gradual process of resettlement. At first fishermen visit the new fishing grounds upstream annually, returning to the Tongu district downstream between August and November when the Volta floods occur. Sometimes the fishermen take their wives upstream with them to assist in preparing the fish for sale by smoking and drying, and in subsequently marketing it. At first the fishermen's camp consists of temporary shacks made from palm fronds, but if the fishing grounds prove successful, steps are taken which gradually turn the camp into a permanent settlement. More solid houses are constructed and the land is cleared for the cultivation of subsistence crops. The return to the Tongu district then becomes less frequent and resettlement develops.

There is still however a notable annual migration upstream of Ewe fishermen from the Tongu, in which probably between 1,000 to 2,000 people may be involved. These fishermen make the journey upstream usually in late November when the floods have subsided. The author made a detailed study of an Ewe community of the Tongu district of the Volta as part of a study made for the Volta River Project Preparatory Commission in 1954-55.<sup>2</sup> The village of Battor which was studied in detail, had a population of 740 from which 81 men and 21 women had journeyed upriver for fishing in November, 1954. At the end of the fishing season only 36 men and 6 women returned to Battor.

In a number of hamlets nearby some 400 to 500 people journeyed upstream for fishing but only 157 men and 127 women returned. The lower number returning to the Tongu district was partly explained by the poor fishing season which was experienced that year so that not all the fishermen could afford to return to their homes. Even so it is fairly obvious that, though the people of Battor continue to expect all the fishermen who go upstream to return at the end of the fishing season, fewer do in fact return year by year. Evidence of the gradual emigration of fishermen from Battor can be seen by the number of derelict and half-built houses in the village. In Battor alone, in which 114 houses were occupied, there were also thirty houses which were vacant and seventy which were partly built. It is customary in this area for young men, when they marry, to build a house fairly near to the family house. Many young men start building houses but before completing them they journey upriver for fishing. The young men expect to complete the work on their houses during the periods when they return downstream, but in fact many of the houses are never finished for the young men may meanwhile settle in places upstream. The impression of depopulation which was gained in Battor is typical of many of the Tongu villages.

The Ewe river fishermen use a great variety of equipment including the seine, set and cast nets, lines, and basket traps. The size and mesh of the set and seine nets are controlled by the Government Fisheries Department in an attempt to prevent over-fishing. The most important method of fishing is the set net and in a stretch of 550 miles on the Volta some 400 Ewe families were found to be using these nets.<sup>3</sup> The seine net is less important than on the coast because it can be used really effectively only where the river-bed is clear of rocks and debris. In the higher reaches of the Volta clear grounds are rare and the streams are relatively narrow. The seine can be used more effectively in the lower tidal reaches where the bed is largely clear of rock. In 1955, thirty-four seine nets, were used in the

Volta and of these twenty-six were used in the lower tidal reaches.

The equipment used for fishing in the rivers is much less costly than that required for sea-fishing. Seine nets, which cannot have wings over eighty yards in length and which require only eight men to operate them, are usually hand-woven and their cost varies from £100 to £200. Set nets are also hand-woven and their cost may be from £1 to £6. The value of lines depends on the number of hooks they contain but they do not usually amount to more than £1 per line. Basket traps are usually made by the fishermen or their families, but if purchased, the largest ones do not cost more than a few shillings. Canoes are smaller and much less costly than those in use on the coast. The smallest canoes (*wu*—Ewe) vary in value from £1 to £15, whilst the larger river canoes (*agbawu*—Ewe) vary from £12 to £40.

A fresh-water fisherman may thus equip himself with a canoe, a set net, basket traps and lines for less than £50. The thirty-six fishermen who returned to Battor at the end of the season owned between them seventy-seven cast nets, 133 set nets, 152 lines and 1,400 basket traps, twenty *wu* and four *agbawu* canoes, at a total value of £1,224. Of the thirty-six fishermen, twenty-three owned equipment worth less than £50 and of these nine had equipment worth less than £10. This low capital outlay enables fishermen to work on their own or in family units and they are thus more mobile and independent than, for example, the coastal fishermen who operate in companies of up to sixty men in which there is a high capital outlay and where the work depends on the initiative of net owners. The greater mobility and independence of river fishermen has undoubtedly been a factor facilitating their resettlement. A further factor is that the river fishermen are able to take their families upstream with them, and wives and children may help with the construction of houses, with the cultivation of crops and also with the fishing and the sale of fish. Land for farming is much easier to obtain upstream than it is in the Tongu district and the culti-



vation of crops becomes in many cases a subsidiary source of income.

Some Ewe families have been settled in the Northern Territories for two generations but even so the link with the original Tongu village is still maintained. As would be expected it is the younger people who, with their families, resettle upstream. The older parents are left behind in the Tongu district. Those who settle upstream continue to return to the Tongu district for religious ceremonies and festivals and also for the burial of their dead.

### Future prospects.

It has been seen that the future of the Ewe coastal fishermen is threatened by the growth of modern methods of fishing in which mechanized craft are used. These methods, which are sponsored by the Government, are rapidly being adopted by fishermen who have hitherto used only primitive methods of fishing. Though these developments are taking place to the West of Accra, the Ewe fishermen will be affected as soon as the new port of Tema is opened. Seine net fishing on the coast may then quickly become a marginal occupation especially since the capital and labour costs of the seine net companies are so high.

Unlike the coastal fishermen, the river fishermen have good prospects, especially

if the Volta scheme is put into operation. This scheme, the importance of which has been described elsewhere<sup>4</sup>, is primarily concerned with damming the river in order to produce electric power for the smelting of aluminium. This would lead to the creation of a large artificial lake in the Northern Territories which would be capable of supporting an important fishery. The Ewe fishermen, who already have a tradition of migration and resettlement on the rivers, would undoubtedly move away from their present Tongu location to take up fishing on the lake. The lake may also prove an attraction to the Ewe fishermen of the coast who may fairly soon need to find some alternative source of income.

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### THE CWEZI SPIRIT POSSESSION CULT

From	Page	Col.	Line	Correction
DR J. H. M. BEATTIE, INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.	151	2	41	For of read or
	153	2	12	For medium's read mediums'
	153	2	29	Delete exclamation mark
	154	1	11	Delete question mark
	155	Footnote		For <i>nkuikire</i> read <i>nkuihire</i>
In my article entitled "Initiation into the Cwezi Spirit Possession Cult in Bunyoro", <i>African Studies</i> , 16, 3, 1957, there appeared a number of typographical errors to which I should like to draw attention:	159	2	38	For <i>bubandwa</i> read <i>baband-wa</i>
	160	2	17	For <i>lays stress</i> read <i>lays less stress</i>

# A NOTE ON LUVALE JOKING RELATIONS

C. M. N. WHITE\*

## SYNOPSIS

*This paper supplements an earlier one<sup>1</sup> on some aspects of Luvale social organization, and is especially intended to remove ambiguities which may be found in the brief reference therein to joking relations. Joking relations are now shown to occur between certain types of kin, but not between members of the same matrilineage. What are primarily joking relations based on kinship are extended into certain friendship relations, and also certain types of clan joking; but there are no paired clan joking relations. Two other types of joking relations are also described. The Luvale have no joking relations with other tribes.*

In 1955<sup>2</sup> I made brief mention of this topic, and questioned whether the Luvale had joking relations in the senses commonly understood. It seems advisable to amplify this subject, since certain features of familiarity and easy relations between individuals in given structural relations would commonly be regarded as typical of joking relations. Kinship provides the most convenient frame of reference for examining these features.

Within the limits of each of the matrilineages which form the most important units of Luvale society no joking relations are found. Here relations are based upon the solidarity of the matrilineage which had important functions in the field of self-help, the feud, and joint responsibility and corporate action on behalf of individual members.<sup>3</sup> The absence of joking relations within a matrilineage involves one point of importance; although there is familiarity between alternate generations whose members call each other grandparent and grandchild, this does not apply to members of the same matrilineage. In this instance the grandparents may show some familiarity to their grandchildren but the relation is not symmetrical.

Although the Luvale affirm that a man is succeeded by his sister's son, in practice this

is by no means always the case. Adelphic succession is common and if a series of brothers succeed one another before succession drops to a lower generation, it may happen that grandchildren and not nephews inherit. Although grandparents and grandchildren of the same matrilineage do not distinguish terminologically their special relationship in the way in which Cunnison has shown to occur on the Luapula<sup>4</sup>, their special relationship is indicated by the modified form of joking relations which otherwise apply between alternate generations. Turner, referring to the position among the Ndembu<sup>5</sup>, who are fairly closely related to the Luvale, stresses that grandparent-grandchild relations, in spite of their familiarity, are associated with certain tensions. Among the Luvale these tensions take a clearly defined form, and are chiefly apparent within a matrilineage.

Relationships of familiarity are common in many African societies between members of alternate generations, and are found among the Luvale with the qualification already indicated. Hence persons calling each other grandparent (*kaka*) and grandchild (*muzukulu*) indulge in familiarity provided they are not members of the same matrilineage; all the members of these

\* Mr C. M. N. White, who has been for many years a District Officer in Northern Rhodesia, is at present on the staff of the Secretariat in Lusaka.

<sup>1</sup> *African Studies*, 14, 3, 1955, pp. 97-112.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. C. M. N. White, *Africa*, Jan. 1957, pp. 59-73.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Cunnison (1956) "Perpetual kinship: a political institution of the Luapula peoples". *Human Problems in British Central Africa*, 20, pp. 28-48.

<sup>5</sup> V. W. Turner (1955) "The spatial separation of generations in Ndembu village structure". *Africa*, 25, 2, pp. 121-37.



alternate generations use these terms to refer to each other, and do not otherwise distinguish each other in terminology. Grandparent-grandchild marriages may take place provided that the grandchild is not the child of a man's own child or a child of his sister's child, but such marriages are infrequent, and are socially disapproved. The Luvale say of them that the parties concerned have stabbed each other (*kulituva poko*).

Joking relations are permitted between Ego and the generation above him in the case of his father's sister or the wife of his mother's brother. These females are known alike as *tatapwevo*, and the husband of a father's sister is called *natu*, the same term applied to a mother's brother. In this relationship there is a marked conflict between asserted norms of conduct and those actually practised. Ego's mother's brother is in a position of special authority over Ego, as I have shown in the earlier paper<sup>1</sup>, and respect is required between Ego and his mother's brother. Adultery with the wife of a mother's brother is therefore a very serious matter, and may result in Ego being expelled from the village, or in a split within the village, if it is brought to light. Nevertheless Ego and his mother's brother's wife are on terms of familiarity, and adultery between them is by no means rare, although comparatively rarely disclosed. In the case of the Luchazi it is often alleged that wife-lending between a mother's brother and his nephew is quite usual, and is explained on the ground that the nephew is likely to inherit his mother's brother's wife, and is merely anticipating the time. Widow inheritance is not regular among the Luvale however, and the two societies differ in this respect, but clandestine relations with a mother's brother's wife are none the less not rare.

Within the same generation a well marked form of joking relation exists between persons calling each other cross-cousin (*musonyi*). Cross-cousin marriages were a preferred form of marriage among the Luvale, although today many young men dislike them because they complain that they are difficult to

dissolve. This preferred form of marriage is reflected in kinship terminology; the husband of a female cross-cousin is called "the one of whom I am jealous" (*muka lisungu lyami*); the wife of a male cross-cousin is 'sister-in-law'. In the latter relationship of brother- and sister-in-law joking occurs, but not in the case of the husband of a female cross-cousin. Free sexual relations between cross-cousins are normal, and a man can always sleep with his cross-cousin if he wants to. But adultery with a cross-cousin married to another man is regarded as worse than casual adulteries with unrelated persons. It is argued that X could have married the woman if he had wanted her, and should leave her alone if she has been left to be married by another man. In addition X is identified with his mother's brother in this situation; the latter, as father of the girl has taken a bride-price which his nephew as possible heir may in theory if not in fact inherit. Thus X is considered to have profited out of the girl's marriage to another, but still continues to have access to her.

It is important in this connection to note that the Luvale treat extra-marital relations of an adulterous nature comparatively lightly. A Luvale girl at her puberty rites is not instructed to avoid infidelity, but to avoid being found out, especially in situations in which kinship relations are involved. It is assumed that she will have lovers, but the consequences of being found out in certain kinship contexts are stressed. In the instruction at her puberty rites, these relationships are referred to when she is told "If your father-in-law wants to sleep with you, do not tell anyone".

No joking relations occur between Ego and the generation immediately below him; his relatives in this generation are described as either *mwana* (child) or *mwiha* (nephew or niece). His position in respect of both types of classificatory relation is one of authority demanding reciprocal respect.

A further form of joking relation which requires comment is found between persons calling each other *nyali* (brother-in-law,

<sup>1</sup> White (1955).

sister-in-law). Sororal polygyny is not found among the Luvale, and X, although he may joke with his wife's sister, should not have sexual relations with her. To do so is said to be likely to lead to the break-up of his marriage because he is likely to find her more attractive than her sister to whom he is married. In fact, judging by the number of men who admit to having such relations, men often sleep clandestinely with their wives' sisters.

A paradoxical situation arises when X has a brother; this brother is *nyali* to the sister of X's wife, and not only jokes with her, but has freedom of access to her sexually. Unless the woman is married, no stigma attaches to such relations and people say of X's brother that the sister of X's wife is his wife, and naturally sleeps with him. Nevertheless it is considered most undesirable for two brothers to marry two sisters, and such marriages almost always denote a slave origin of the women. Marriage between persons calling each other *nyali* is therefore disapproved but sexual relations between them are common except where there is a sibling relationship described as *yaya* (younger brother or sister) or *songo* (younger brother or sister) involved. A person should not have adulterous relations with the sibling of his own spouse, nor with the spouse of his own sibling.

Ego calls the wife of a male cross-cousin *nyali*: here a joking relation is doubled since it exists between Ego and his cross-cousin, and between Ego and his *nyali*. Adultery between Ego and the wife of his cross-cousin is a small matter, not normally leading to any legal consequences, and settled amicably between the parties concerned without compensation.

Joking relations between kin among the Luvale fall into the categories which have been described above. In every case there is primarily a joking relation between persons with a given structural relationship between them described by certain fixed terms. But in each case there are certain modifications in the joking relation which may arise from the specific nature of the genealogical links between the persons concerned. Classi-

ficatory kinship terminology is not an absolute yardstick by which to measure the presence or extent of joking relations. Where such terminology applies the Luvale do not accept the proposition that joking relations between certain specified kin are a feature of their society, since they find it necessary to qualify the nature and extent of such joking relations in each instance. In their fullest form they see joking relations equated with freedom of sexual relations, and it is especially in this field that the extent of classificatory terminology and its attendant joking relations is liable to be modified by genealogical considerations. Social distance between kin is not merely a matter of terminological usage, even though terminology does not assist in indicating social distance.

\* \* \*

We may now turn to an extension of joking relations in fields outside kinship. The Luvale are greatly given to forming friendships of a voluntary nature outside the limits of their kin, and they designate these friendships by using kinship terminology especially associated with joking relations between kin. In the most intimate cases they like to call each other *musonyi* (cross-cousin), and the Luvale say that a woman sleeping with a lover invariably addresses him as her *musonyi*. Equally common but perhaps a little less intimate is the use of *nyali* between such friends. On the other hand such friends do not use the terminology of the grandparent-grandchild relationship to address each other although familiarity exists in this relationship. Nor do friends use the sibling terms of *yaya* and *songo* as a mark of familiarity between each other. Thus far the usage between friends corresponds to the most robust form of joking relationship between kin. But an important exception occurs. The Luvale avoid parents-in-law, and the latter avoid sons- or daughters-in-law. Nevertheless *tatawenu* (father-in-law, son-in-law) is used between close friends in the same way as *musonyi* and *nyali*, so that a term implying avoidance becomes a term of endearment. This appears



to be logical; avoidance between parents-in-law and children-in-law obviates conflict, just as familiarity between other types of kin is equated with an obligation not to enter into conflict. Friends of a particularly close nature should not engage in conflicts, and either type of kinship terminology is therefore applicable between them, but not the other forms of kinship terminology. Other terms may be used between unrelated persons without any implication of familiarity; thus a man may respectfully address an old man as *kaka* (grandparent); a man may address a younger man with words of good advice and call him *songo* (my young brother). But the use of kinship terms in such extensions as these are contrasted sharply with the use of other terms between close friends. Standardized forms of social relationships are thus fused into a single system applicable both to relatives and unrelated persons. Only within the matrilineage is there unity and solidarity in which no place exists for these variations in social attitudes. A person's joking relations with other members of his own matrilineage are thus contrasted with those he has with non-members with whom he may be on special terms of familiarity either through marriage links or through specific voluntary friendships.

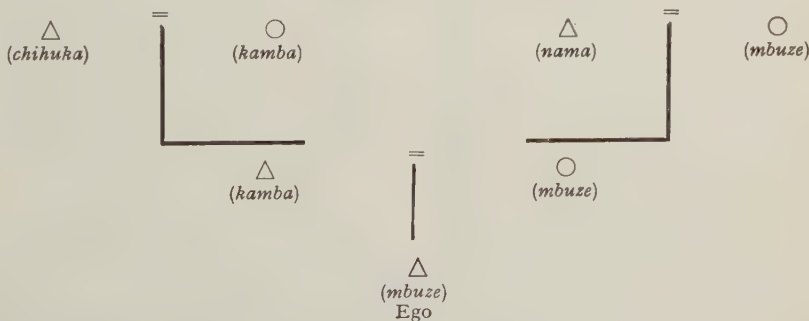
At this stage it is necessary to examine the nature of joking relations between the Luvale clans. I have already discussed features of the Luvale clans<sup>1</sup>, and for the present it is only necessary to point out that they are equivalent to maximal matrilineages

of a fictitious nature since their members are dispersed, and cannot trace genealogical links with one another apart from those established within their actual matrilineages. Unlike many Central African tribes, the Luvale have no reciprocal joking relations between paired clans, and no reciprocal funerary friendships based upon paired clans. Since the clans are exogamous, joking relations do not occur between members of a single clan except where they arise from voluntary friendships between clansmen who cannot establish a genealogical link with each other. Clan membership like matrilineage membership is primarily a matter of unity and solidarity.

A man may, however, have joking relations with other clans arising out of his kinship links to them. This may be illustrated from the genealogy below, on which the names shown are clan-names.

In this genealogy Ego is a member of the *mbuze* clan; he looks for help first to his matrilineage and its extension of other *mbuze* clansmen; secondly to the members of the father's matrilineage, and its extension of other *kamba* clansmen; thirdly to the matrilineage of his mother's father, and its extension of other *nama* clansmen. He does not look for help to the members of the *chihuka* clan, his father's father's matrilineage.

In the case of other *mbuze* clansmen, his right of assistance is automatic and he does not joke with them; in the case of members of the *nama* and *kamba* clans his right to assistance is secondary, and he says: "The



<sup>1</sup> White (1955 and 1956).

*nama* begot my mother and the *kamba* bore my father". Ego jokes with members of these two clans on this ground. He neither jokes with nor expects help from *chihuka* clansmen.

These joking relations with members of the *kamba* and *nama* clans do not take precedence over the relationships between Ego and kinsmen as enjoyed within the limits of actual genealogical kinship. Thus Ego says: "I joke with members of the *kamba* clan because they bore my father, but not with those relatives whom I cannot be the nature of their relationship joke with, even though they are *kambas*. Similarly although I do not joke with the *chihukas* as a clan because they are too remote, I do joke with those *chihukas* whom I term *kaka* (grand-parent) on my father's side".

These inter-clan joking relations thus arise out of actual genealogical links which are projected into the fictitious kinship of the clans; they are not in any way determined by any regular pairing of clans on a reciprocal basis such as occurs among e.g. the Bemba or Ambo. By this means the duty of help between clansmen is none the less extended to cases where persons are members of different clans which establish a claim to mutual aid arising from actual genealogical links, so that Ego can mobilize a much wider range of support that would be afforded solely by his own matrilineage and his own clan members. Since the Luvale clans are widely dispersed and occur also among the Chokwe and Luchazi, and since, as I have shown<sup>1</sup>, the Luvale have been characterized by great mobility, such inter-clan joking relations must have been of great importance to a man operating away from his own kinsmen or clansmen. At the same time the joking relations between clans no doubt served a useful purpose in maintaining social control. A man's own clan is essentially a unitary group taking action on behalf of its own members against others, so that one might in the case of feuds envisage one clan being pitted against another. The inter-clan joking relations must have served to mitigate such conflicts, and helped to organize a

stable social system outside the limits of separate matrilineages or their fictitious extension to common clan membership.

The type of inter-clan joking relations thus established manifests itself in ways often similar to those existing between members of reciprocal clans with such joking relations. Thus if Ego dies, clansmen with whom he joked might jokingly ask members of his own matrilineage which of them was responsible for his death, since sorcery is believed to operate mainly within a matrilineage.

It is important to stress that these inter-clan joking relations arise in the first instance from actual genealogical links since the Luvale themselves see no resemblance between them and the joking relations between reciprocal paired clans, and if asked whether they have inter-clan joking relationships like the Ambo or Bemba, promptly deny that they do.

\* \* \*

There are two other types of joking relations which should be briefly noted; neither arises from either kinship or voluntary friendship. Persons born on the same day joke together; they know of their birth on the same day primarily because they live in the same village or sufficiently near for other older persons to be able to tell them that they were so born. Joking partners of this type indulge in robust familiarity but are not particularly numerous.

A milder type of joking relation occurs between people who share the same name. Each calls the other *muka lijina lyami* (one of my name). Joking relations between persons of the same name are not automatic. They depend upon a similarity in age between the parties. A much younger man does not joke thus with an older man even though their names happen to be the same.

\* \* \*

Joking relations in Central Africa occur in a further form between pairs of tribes. Thus the Bemba joke with the Ngoni, and the Lozi with the Ila. The Luvale have no

<sup>1</sup> White (1956).



inter-tribal joking relations of this type. It is commonly held that inter-tribal joking relations have originated from a history of hostility between tribes concerned, especially where the hostility took the form of rivalry rather than raiding on the one hand, or a fight for existence on the other. Although the Luvale live in proximity to the Chokwe, Luchazi, Mbunda and Lunda, and all are closely related tribes, and their relations with each other have frequently been hostile, the hostility has mainly been manifested in raiding for slaves, and not in actual warfare or in balanced rivalry. The point is of some interest in connection with the Lunda-Luvale "war" at the end of the last century.

Both Lunda and Luvale are inclined to make much of this war, and point out that according to tradition the Lunda had to call upon Lozi help to avoid annihilation. But when one presses the history of the episode it becomes remarkably difficult to find any real issue over which the war was fought. I have little doubt that it was no more than part of the series of raids for slaves which the Luvale indulged in continuously against

their Lunda neighbours. It has certainly left no inter-tribal joking relation behind it.

To-day the Luvale sometimes find in urban areas that the Kaonde claim an inter-tribal joking relation with them. They point out that they never had any close relations with the Kaonde in the past to have given rise to such a relation, and only came in contact at all on scanty occasions when Luvale slave raiders pushed as far east as the Kaonde. They consider that the Kaonde claim a joking relation to-day on account of coming from the same north-western part of Northern Rhodesia as the Luvale, because they have seen inter-tribal joking relations in towns between other pairs of tribes who have some geographical proximity.

The Luvale thus do have a form of joking relation founded primarily upon the kinship structure which may be extended outside strict kinship into links between persons established through clans or friendship. The brief reference in my earlier paper<sup>1</sup> may be thought misleading without further amplification which is now provided in the foregoing discussion.

## SURVEYS BY I.F.A.N.<sup>2</sup>

The Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences (C.C.T.A.-C.S.A.), Paris, reports on two related surveys at present being conducted in the Lower Ivory Coast by the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire.

The first and more comprehensive is a study of migration which supplements one made a year ago and coincides with similar surveys of migration being made in Ghana and in the First Agricultural Sector of the Ivory Coast. It will comprise a systematic census over a year of migrants using the Bonaké road with sample polls relating to migrants' family status, former journeys, motives and religious and political affiliations and attitudes. Between the peak periods of

migration, i.e. during the workers' seasonal stay in the Basse-Côte, complementary ethnographic and sociological studies will be carried out on, for instance, plantation labour, particular ethnic groups among the migrants and the economic causes and implications of the migration.

The second survey is of the Abidjan markets and comprises (a) a study of trends in licences issued; (b) a brief census of pedlars followed by more detailed sample studies of their origins, visits to the Basse-Côte, the nature of their businesses, their stock and their prices; (c) a study of localization and specialization in the urban markets and the emergence of new markets.

<sup>1</sup> White (1955).

<sup>2</sup> Published with acknowledgements to C.C.T.A.—C.S.A., by kind permission of the Director of the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research, Department of Education, Arts and Science, Pretoria.

# URBAN LOBOLO ATTITUDES: A PRELIMINARY REPORT<sup>1</sup>

MIA BRANDEL\*

## SYNOPSIS

Lobolo is far from dying out amongst urban Africans, in spite of the fact that in the European form of marriage, which is increasingly entered upon by urban Africans, it must lose what some writers have considered its primary function, namely the transfer of the status of the children to the lobolo-payer's group. This indicates that the lobolo has assumed other functions, some of these apparently new functions, by which new urban needs find, at least temporarily, some satisfaction. At the same time the changing urban social structure and the changed kinship relationships have necessitated considerable changes in procedure, owing to the fact that an institution deeply embedded in a tradition is being adapted to the requirements of an increasingly individualized society. This results in a number of new features in the procedure and the operation of the lobolo-institution. In this paper only the new functions are indicated, whilst in a later paper the new features will be dealt with.

In her analysis of these new functions and new features the writer distinguishes between lobolo-as-such and lobolo-in-marriage, and it is only the latter she discusses here. As a starting point the attitudes of a group of professional women have been analysed, and the point of view of the women has been stressed since the writer believes that the changing status of the women as daughters, wives and mothers is the key factor in most of the changes in the urban lobolo. This study, a first exploratory investigation, reveals that lobolo in its modern setting is still—in the less detribalized strata of the population—a child-price, in so far as it transfers the custody of the children to the husband, and again—in the most detribalized strata—an instrument for uniting the two families. It also functions to stabilize urban marriage, to compensate the girl's parents for educational expenses and the loss of their daughter, to provide them with economic security, to create a security-link for the daughter with her parental home, to express social status, to pay for the wedding expenses, and finally, as a symbol of Africanism.

"Which of the African customs do you think are still good?" I put this question again to a group of women. They could be Youth Leaders, nurses, members of a Homemakers' Club, or just some friends and neighbours gathered around the table. Of whatever social class or educational level, married women will answer with few exceptions, "lobolo". Generally everyone agrees, "Yes, lobolo, that is a good custom".

"It is a sense of pride for the girl," says a mature lecturer and educationist to me. "If she is not highly lobola'd the other girls look down on her." Then she adds, "That

is one school of thought amongst our people, but the other school thinks that it is crippling in its effect on the young couple".

One can assume that the representatives of these two "schools of thought" have been arguing their case ever since money began to replace cattle. With money, a series of new factors arise, for although some of the prestige and taboos surrounding cattle have become transferred to money, the permanence inherent in cattle has been destroyed, and replaced by the mobility and elusiveness of money. "Money," as the women assure one, "is not like cattle. Cattle remain and,

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank Dr M. D. W. Jeffreys and Professor M. G. Marwick whose advice and comments on an earlier draft of this paper were most valuable.

\* Mrs Mia Brandel has for some years been conducting research among urban Africans on the Witwatersrand. The material presented in this paper was gathered during an investigation into the needs of urban African women, under a grant from an anonymous donor which is administered by the South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg. As a Nuffield Research Fellow, she is now continuing her study of certain aspects of social change in urban African society.



moreover, increase, but money disappears and, if ever reclaimed, it is gone, spent, and there is nothing left."

Money, moreover, is a practical necessity which cattle never were. "You always need money," say the women. Unlike cattle, money becomes with elapsing time more difficult to refund, and even if payment is made in cattle, these are sometimes sold as we shall see later, and the money spent. Furthermore, and possibly also unlike cattle, the amounts asked for *lobolo* have shown a persistent tendency to rise with the rising standard of living. Finally, the *lobolo* payable in money becomes pervaded with the competitive spirit of the West, and has introduced new possibilities for commercialization. Money makes any exchange between people seem like a purchase.

The change which has come over the *lobolo* institution, however, cannot be entirely explained in terms of the transition from cattle to money, as the women seem to think. Much more drastic changes have been, and are at present being, effected in town, and this paper aims at bringing out some of these changes which appear to be less well known, yet are of greater significance. In order to recognize their full scope, it is necessary to give a brief description of the function (or functions) of the tribal *lobolo*, and to extract therefrom its main features.

### *Tribal Lobolo*

The function or functions of the tribal *lobolo* have been variously described as child- or bride-price, as a guarantee for the stability of the marriage, for the good treatment of the wife, and the good behaviour of the husband, as a compensation for the bride's group for her loss, as a legalization or validation of the marriage, as part of an elaborate system of exchange, or any combination of these functions. It would seem true that, in the great variety of tribal and local *usūs* one can always find customs which appear to

support one or another of these views<sup>1</sup>, and which render any generalization invalid.

There seems no doubt that the primary function of *lobolo* itself is the transference of the status of children from their mother's to the *lobolo*-payer's group or family, as is stated by Dr M. D. W. Jeffreys, who has adduced an impressive mass of material to substantiate his statement.<sup>2</sup> Also Professor Margaret Read writes, "The essential feature of the *lobolo* system is the legal custody of the children".<sup>3</sup>

Defined in such terms, *lobolo* appears as an institution separate and independent from marriage and, according to Dr Jeffreys, *lobolo* and marriage can and do exist independently. Each has a different function, i.e. different aims and consequences in tribal society. The *lobolo* transaction transfers the woman's child-bearing capacity from her father's to the *lobolo*-payer's family: *lobolo* "buys" the womb, not the woman. The communal marriage feast transfers the woman from the legal custody of her father to that of her husband: by marriage, the husband becomes, in the tribal sense of these words, the "master" or "owner" of his wife.<sup>4</sup> *Lobolo* makes a woman into "mother", marriage makes her into "wife". When *lobolo* and marriage become combined as is generally the case in the normal Bantu marriage, it needs a legal expert to separate the two cultural traits and their functions.

In practice, the "womb" is difficult to separate from the "wife". Different customs with regard to widows of child-bearing age show this clearly. The Rev. H. A. Junod<sup>5</sup> describes the ceremony of the adjudication of the inheritance of a deceased family head and how the widows are included in this inheritance and redistributed, although not entirely without their consent, amongst the heirs. Here, amongst the Thonga (Tsonga), the "womb" and the "wife" remain indivisible. Amongst some of the Transvaal Shangana-Tsonga, however

<sup>1</sup> E. Torday, "The Principles of Bantu Marriage", *Africa*, 2, 1929, 255-90.

<sup>2</sup> M. D. W. Jeffreys, "Lobolo is Child-price", *African Studies*, 10, 4, 1951, pp. 145-184.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Read, "Native Standards of Living and African Culture Change", Supplement to *Africa*, 11, 3, 1938, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 103, where the difficulties arising from the equation of the rights in *personam* with the rights in *rem* are discussed.

<sup>5</sup> H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, MacMillan & Co., London, 1927, I, pp. 207 ff.

they seem to be kept distinct. A Tsonga family head died recently near Tzaneen, Transvaal, leaving three widows and fifteen children. His male relatives in Johannesburg told me that they do not "marry" the widows again amongst the heirs. The women must stay together with their children lest "the village be broken up". They may have no "husbands", but can have "boy friends", with the proviso that they "cannot follow their boy friends", and that the children are born and stay in the village, for they belong to the deceased's family. Here we see the freedom of the "wife" and her sexual activities, as against the un-freedom of the "womb" and the seed-raiser's child-bearing capacities.

Also in other respects, the tribal Africans do not appear to have always distinguished clearly between *lobolo* and marriage, and their respective legal consequences. Meyer Fortes<sup>1</sup> draws attention to the difficulties arising from the difference between theory and practice.

Anthropologists, however, have consistently attempted to avoid all association with ideas of "purchase" and "payment", and have been at great pains to define the *lobolo* when combined with marriage, as a "transference" of cattle or other valuables from the bridegroom's to the bride's family, generally adding that the native word for *lobolo* never implies a "buying" in the European sense. Yet, when statements of members of a tribe studied had to be translated in European languages, these experts had apparently to have recourse to such expressions as "buying a wife" or "paying for a woman" when referring to the *lobolo*-transaction in marriage.

The urban Africans certainly have no such scruples, and neither do they distinguish between the legal consequences of *lobolo* and marriage.

*Case I:* In town, a man from the labouring or domestic class will tell you, "When I pay *lobolo*, the children are mine, and she's a wife,

and if I don't pay *lobolo*, she is nothing (this with a gesture of throwing something away). She is like a girl friend, and the children belong to her". Upon one's further queries regarding the difference between a wife and a girl friend, John might say, "With a wife, when she follows another man, that man must pay me £25, that's like a fine . . .". In a European environment, values are expressed in money, and punishments are in money fines.

Yet, for the purpose of this paper, it is useful to distinguish clearly between *lobolo-as-such*, and *lobolo-in-marriage*. Whilst *lobolo-as-such* has remained even in town, pretty closely what it always was, a child-price (Jeffreys), it is the *lobolo-in-marriage* which has undergone radical changes, as natural concomitants to the radical changes in the marriage-concept.

### *Urban Marriage*

The Native Administration Act of 1927, as amended in 1929<sup>2</sup>, draws a clear distinction between what it terms a "marriage" and a "customary union" entered into by Africans. A "marriage" is a union according to the Common Law of South Africa, and a "customary union" means the association of a man and a woman as husband and wife according to Native Law and Custom. Either one or the other of these two kinds of marriages is open to Africans, but not both at the same time—that is, legally. If both have been entered upon, successively or simultaneously, the Common Law marriage prevails, though not always.

A "marriage" has a clear legal definition; the act or acts which complete a "marriage" have been legally established, as well as the act or acts by which a divorce becomes a fact. A "customary union", at least in the Transvaal, has no such clear legal beginning, nor end. Its registration is not compulsory. Hence it is sometimes difficult if not impossible to decide whether a "customary union" did take place, as well as whether such a union has been dissolved.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Meyer Fortes, *op. cit.* p. 103 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In all legal matters I follow Julius Lewin, *Studies in African Native Law*, The African Bookman, Cape Town, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Julius Lewin, *op. cit.* pp. 33ff and 39ff.



"The existence of two forms of marriage, one under the Common Law and the other under Native Law, and both open to the same people, produces many situations unprecedented in other legal systems."<sup>1</sup> It leads to many anomalies and much confusion. The legal consequences of the two legally recognized forms of union are entirely different and often in conflict, such as the rights of property, grounds for divorce, rules of inheritance, custody of the children, etc., etc.

"No doubt it was originally believed that Natives living under tribal conditions would retain customary unions . . . while those domiciled in urban areas or who had assimilated Western civilization to at least some degree would prefer to marry under the Common Law."<sup>2</sup> In practice, however, the situation is not so clear-cut. In the in-between stage of our urban Africans, very few partners to a "customary union" are thinking and acting entirely in terms of tribal law. They perform a great many acts not provided for in tribal law. They lend or borrow money, they buy goods, they make hire-purchase contracts, they take out insurance policies and open savings accounts. Briefly, they act or desire to act as persons, and refuse collective liabilities and responsibilities. On the other hand, very few spouses in a Common Law marriage have absorbed a completely European attitude and European ways. In many vital respects they adhere to tribal ideas, ways and values. The bulk of the population is, in reality, somewhere between the two extremes.

Adaptive legislation has lagged behind with the result that the emotional insecurity inevitable in times of culture change, and from which parties to urban marriage suffers, is heightened by legal insecurity. It is also in this context that the urban *lobolo* must be considered.

The question is generally not whether legal protection, legal redress, legal action or legal appeal would be possible or fruitful. Often the question is not even whether an act or situation is legal or illegal. What counts is the force of personality, the possi-

bilities of intimidation, the physical and economic strength with which either one or the other partner can push through any claim which seems advantageous to him or her, and for this claim he or she will appeal to either of the two systems of law, depending on which of the two promises him or her the greatest benefits in a particular case.

*Case II:* Many a location superintendent can tell one, for instance, "To my office comes Dr X, who has trouble with his wife. First he tries all European points of view; when that does not succeed he goes over to African arguments. Maybe it is twenty years ago since he thought in tribal terms; maybe he has forgotten everything tribal, but somehow, when there is trouble, the old comes up again. They try to get the best of two worlds."

On the whole, and for obvious reasons, a man will appeal to his tribal rights, whilst a woman will seek protection by appeal to the Common Law. Whether the Common Law can always protect her is another matter.

*Case III:* As illustration may serve—the case history of Martha, as told by her best friend. Martha is a Xhosa, an Anglican (Church of the Province), a fully-trained nurse earning £22 per month. She married according to Common Law, and her *lobolo* was £70. Her first baby was sent to her husband's people in the country, because at that time she was doing her midwifery course. By the time the second baby arrived "there was no more harmony between her and her husband". Amongst other factors in their conflict, her husband wanted his wife to leave Johannesburg and live with his people, "as is the custom", he said. But she wanted to stay with him, and keep the baby in Johannesburg with her. In 1952–3 they went through the Divorce Court. "The judge was quite sarcastic", and said to the husband, "You can't have it both ways. You are married according to Christian rites, and so if your wife wants to stay with you and have her baby in Johannesburg, she can do so. But you want to be a Native husband, and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

send your wife and children to your people." Ultimately, the judge awarded the custody of the children to the mother, "but her elder baby is still with her husband's people and she is pining after it . . .".

Any lawyer will here say impatiently, "What's she worrying about? She can apply for a writ asking the man's parents to hand over the child." In reality, however, Martha is a gentle person, who is hesitating between age-old habits of thought and her new urban rights. No wonder she thinks *lobolo* is bad, "One is forever in the hands of one's parents-in-law . . ." A mother to be awarded the personal custody of her own children is still too revolutionary a thought for this rural-born young woman. In the excitement of the divorce case, and "strongly talked to" by her friends, she could fight for her mother rights. After all the agitation was over, she could not sustain the new spirit.

In discussing the insecurity of marriage, a distinction must be made between *de jure* and *de facto* insecurity. I shall deal mainly with the latter: the insecurity, not as an objective fact but as a subjective sentiment, in which *lobolo* has its own peculiar function.

As always, in times of rapid and violent societal changes, the women are the worst sufferers of the legal insecurity. For instance, unlike a Common Law marriage between two Europeans, a Common Law marriage between Africans, does not automatically imply a marriage in Community of Property.<sup>1</sup> Africans desirous of marrying in this way are required to make an express declaration to that effect. If this is omitted, the distribution of property at death follows Native Law and Custom, i.e. the wife cannot inherit anything. Although an increasing number of women are aware of this, there are still large numbers of women ignorant of it and many prospective husbands unwilling to assist at such a declaration.

Another instance, illustrating the serious consequences of the general "laissez faire" policy is cited by Julius Lewin. If the husband is killed in an accident at work in a

factory, the widow in a "customary union" can obtain compensation. If he is run over in the street by a careless motorist, a "customary union" widow cannot recover damages, although she could do so had she been married to him under the Common Law.<sup>2</sup>

Following general African custom, I shall, for brevity, speak of the two forms of legally recognized unions as "European marriage" and "Native marriage". The most usual form of marriage of the people dealt with here is European marriage plus *lobolo*.

### Urban Lobolo

Keeping in mind the distinction established above, between *lobolo*-as-such and *lobolo*-in-marriage, it is obvious that, legally, the latter loses what the above-mentioned experts consider as its primary function, as soon as marriage itself confers the rights of fatherhood on the husband. This happens in the form of marriage called "European marriage". Moreover, and possibly for this reason, *lobolo* in a European marriage is not legally recognized, and in case of divorce the husband has no legal means to recover the amount paid. In some cases of Native marriages, the Courts have refused to enforce a *lobolo* agreement, where they considered the amount demanded to be excessive. In a European marriage, however, the Courts will only interfere if the husband has made an express agreement to pay *lobolo*.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, therefore, and although *lobolo* is not illegal in a "European marriage" the Courts, as the urban women say, "always forget about *lobolo*".

In spite of all this the *lobolo*-in-marriage has continued in existence, and this fact alone would show that *lobolo* has come to assume other functions, possibly new functions, or that some of the functions mentioned earlier and which were possibly of secondary importance, have assumed a new significance in the general insecurity of the legal and factual marriage-position in town.

In fact, *lobolo* is fast becoming a new institution with altogether different functions

<sup>1</sup> Julius Lewin, *An Outline of Native Law*, R. L. Esson & Co. Ltd., Johannesburg, 1944, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Julius Lewin, *Studies in African Native Law*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Julius Lewin, *An Outline of Native Law*, p. 24.



around which new and different customs and conventions are arising, and from which the people are expecting different need-satisfactions. Some of the changes are inevitable and permanent, others seem accidental and possibly temporary. The changes are many and the patterns confused; some are dependent on group attitudes; and others, on the individual personalities concerned; and in trying to extricate some from amongst the entangled mass of new urban patterns one cannot possibly hope to be exhaustive in this stage of the transitional process.

There would be some justification in saying that the urban *lobolo* hardly deserves to be called any longer by the same name as the tribal *lobolo*. Since, however, Africans themselves adhere to the same name, I follow their usage while at the same time making it clear that whenever a distinction is required I shall talk of "urban *lobolo*" and "tribal *lobolo*". "Urban *lobolo*", then, means the *lobolo* institution as found functioning in Johannesburg amongst Africans in various stages of detribalization, and "tribal *lobolo*" stands for the *lobolo* as it functions in tribal society according to anthropological literature. It does not stand for the *lobolo* as it may function at the moment in some tribal areas. Inevitably changes effected in the towns must filter through to the country areas, and similar developments may occur elsewhere. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the growth of new patterns will be found further advanced in the towns, and certainly in a leading "modern" city like Johannesburg. In talking about the *lobolo*-institution, the *lobolo*-transaction, or simply the *lobolo*, I mean, unless otherwise stated, the *lobolo*-in-marriage in its barest operational definition, as "the transference of cattle, money or other valuables, from the bridegroom's to the bride's family or group".

#### *Principal Sources of the Changes in Lobolo*

My personal experience has brought me into contact with two principal sources of changes, which may not exhaust the full range. First, there has been the adoption and part-assimilation of European concepts—of the family, of marriage, and of the

marriage-relationship, of women as wives and daughters, and, in general, of the "Rights of Man". This involves, amongst other things the change from marriage as an affair between two families to marriage as primarily concerning two persons (in the legal sense of *personae*); the decrease in the sense of kinship obligation and the fragmentation of the tribal family to the barest nucleus of, not only father, mother and children, but, even further, of mother and children only; the resistance against collective or "familial" duties and responsibilities which imply the interchangeability of individual members of a family by which the liabilities incurred by one member can be discharged by another member; the changing emphasis from cultural or social fatherhood and motherhood to biological parenthood; and the growing emancipation of the women—in *summu*, the increasing individualization and personalization of the members of a once collective society. Out of all this is emerging a multitude of new features unthinkable in the tribal *lobolo* which was, after all, deeply embedded in a collective society.

Secondly, there is the peculiar penury of urban Africans which confronts them with new insecurities and new needs. No new institutions for satisfying these have as yet been able to emerge and find general acceptance; and Africans have thus far made an erratic response to European attitudes and institutions that might be appropriate in the new circumstances in which they find themselves.

In the attempt to satisfy certain new needs, by means of the *lobolo*, this ancient institution has been charged and overloaded with expectations, ideas, values and sentiments, which have assumed the significance of entirely new functions which *lobolo* is expected to perform.

In this paper I propose to deal with both these new features and these new functions. In so doing my aim is to draw attention to the importance of a future scientific and exhaustive study of *lobolo* for our knowledge of institutional change in cultural transition. Also, and exactly because the *lobolo* is the

only institution which has survived, essentially intact from the general wreckage of the tribal structure, a penetrating study of the *lobolo* in town will uncover something about the as yet almost entirely hidden relationship between old and new systems of beliefs and values. Also in this area I hope here and there to make a contribution.

In formulating my hypotheses, I have followed the qualitative approach; my evidence is merely illustrative. In times of rapid change, even a single instance (and none of my examples stand alone) may herald a new orientation, a new development. For the significance does not lie in how many persons think, say, or act in a particular way, but who does so and under what circumstances. If the circumstances are known to be recurrent or even habitual, and if the person concerned occupies a leading position in her community, and the response observed proves to have been successful and adequate to the challenge, others are sure to follow the example.

### *The Functions of the Urban Lobolo*

My initial hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the findings from a cluster of questions on the *lobolo*, inserted—actually as an afterthought—in a questionnaire applied to 48 nurses of the Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg. The general aim was to discover the needs of the urban African nurses (which was part of my general study on the needs of urban African women). The general trend of the information sought concerned family background and home life, reasons for choosing the nursing profession, opinions on Johannesburg, work and study, leisure-time occupation, further wishes and future plans, attitudes to sex, illegitimacy, marriage and husbands, use of wages, personal worries, etc.

The questions aimed at inducing the respondents to talk freely. All key questions were open-end ones; some were even purposely vague and open to different interpretations, and the way in which they were interpreted gave significant information. A point was only to be pursued if it had meaning for the respondent. Full scope was left to

the uniqueness of the individual, and, while this made precise statistical analysis difficult if not impossible, it led to much new and unexpected insight.

The selection of the informants was done by investigators and influenced by considerations of ease of contact. There was no question of scientific sampling. The main trends had to be uncovered in the shortest possible time.

The investigators were four highly graded persons amongst the African nursing and teaching staff, selected with the help of the matron, mainly because they commanded prestige, confidence and goodwill amongst the nurses. None had any previous experience of the task required nor any sociological training. Hence they brought to the job, besides a high degree of natural intelligence and a thorough knowledge of the nursing and hospital background, a fresh approach and a curiosity undimmed by routine. There was no check on investigators' bias as regards *lobolo*. In fact, two were neutral, one was a violent pro-*lobolo* crusader, the other was "dead against". I myself did not apply a single questionnaire fully, although I did some partial probings. Racial tension, particularly in the nursing profession, ruled this out.

All responses were recorded *verbatim*. Classification and interpretation—the most important and difficult operation in cross-cultural research—was done afterwards in discussion-meetings of our little "study-group" (as we called ourselves) held regularly during the investigation. Gradually all initial mistrust and wariness disappeared; we became all "social workers wanting to help the poor nurses with their many, many problems"; we were all keen to discover and understand—in fact, in the process we became friends with an overwhelming interest in common. I make bold to state that the most important sources of information have been exactly these discussion-meetings. Sometimes new features emerged, sometimes explanations and interpretations were given which could never have been caught in a questionnaire. Sometimes the for-*lobolo* and the against-*lobolo* investigators quarrelled



freely, and these quarrels were again in themselves valuable information, showing the considerable emotional charge which urban Africans have put into the concept of *lobolo*.

The respondents were 48 nurses and student nurses, whose tribal and religious affiliations, representative of the main tribes and churches of Johannesburg, are here left out of consideration. The sample was too small to search for significant correlations. About half of the respondents were urban-born and about half rural-born.

Educational level		Marital status	
Matriculation	3	single	41
Teacher's Cert.	7	married	4
Junior Cert.	36	divorced	2
Unknown	2	engaged	1
	—		—
	48		48

Thirty-three of the respondents thought that *lobolo* was "a good thing", 13 thought it was "a bad thing", and 2 could not make up their minds. The arguments of these two were unfavourable; they were obviously veering away from an earlier favourable opinion, and they have been grouped with those who were against *lobolo*.

All respondents without exception gave their reasons, and many of them more than one reason. The "Custom" argument occurred more often singly than any of the other arguments. These arguments for or against were classified and the main categories which emerged were "Value" and "Parents", "Custom" and "Guarantee".

The two most frequently mentioned reasons, i.e. the "Value" and the "Parents" arguments, were cited both in approval and disapproval of *lobolo*. The "Value" argument, for instance, was used in two ways: "If he has paid for you, he can ill-treat you as much as he likes", and "If he has paid for you he will not maltreat you",—a typical symptom of transition.

The reasons given in approval of *lobolo* would appear to be indicative of new functions, whilst the reasons in disapproval of *lobolo* would seem to point to new features.

These findings will first be analysed as

"the nurses' point of view". Subsequently, they will be related to the points of view of the other parties concerned with the *lobolo*-in-marriage. Finally this will be placed within the total of the urban African situation with special reference to the general insecurity. Needless to say, and paradoxical as it may seem, the women and girls, who traditionally had no say in *lobolo* matters, who took no part in the *lobolo pourparlers* and who were not consulted in its use, are in the urban situation the key factors in the changes that have taken place.

#### *The Nurses' Point of View*

The nurses' answers are presented in the accompanying table (p. 51). The following general points emerge.

Not one of the respondents mentions the question of the children's status. It is not known whether, on further questioning, they would have mentioned it. All of them are "Christian", at least have indicated adherence to one of the Christian Churches; all are advanced women belonging, or going to belong, to the best-paid and most highly esteemed women's profession, and conscious of it. They all anticipate a "European" marriage with an educated husband, and aspire to European attitudes towards marriage and children. *Lobolo* as child-price has lost its function on this social and educational level.

This attitude can be contrasted with cases found amongst the less educated young women, such as domestic servants.

*Case IV:* Women like Mary, for instance, who is a laundry woman going about her job with her baby on her back. Her husband married her according to Native Law and *lobolo* was paid. "£65 . . . oh no! That is not too much for we got this for it!", and with a loving smile she points with her head to the baby on her back.

A commercial terminology is used without apparent embarrassment. Words like "paid for you", "bought you", "price", "getting you cheaply", are used freely. The idea that the girls should feel this as a lowering of human dignity, would seem to be a European construction. With the exception of one

nurse who "does not like being bought", those who regard the "Value" argument negatively do not seem to do so because a woman cannot be measured in terms of money, but because her real value would be too high a price for anyone to be able to pay.

With regard to the two arguments occurring both for and against *lobolo*, more reasons are advanced for than against *lobolo*. This is in my opinion more important than the relation between the pros and cons. My explanation, given conjecturally, is that the arguments in approval are socially conditioned, well established, and easily verbalized, whilst the arguments in disapproval are directly related to personal experiences with sisters or cousins, and therefore, not yet quite articulate.

Indications are that there would have been considerable differences in attitude to *lobolo* amongst those engaged, married, unmarried and divorced. The sample was, however, too small to establish significant results.

The following more specific points emerge.

(1) The *lobolo* enforces the husband's "respect". It is not easy to perceive what this actually means, except as the opposite of "ill-treatment". It may imply either or both of two meanings, the respect due to a wife as against the attitude to a girl friend, in which case it would corroborate the men's attitude, as quoted on p. 36 (Case I), that a non-*lobola'd* wife is "nothing", or the respect one has for an "expensive article", as against the nonchalance displayed towards something cheap or something given for nothing.

Another point is whether the girls' certainty that *lobolo* will inspire respect from the husbands, is really so or whether the girls only believe it to be so. The four investigators were convinced that this was a fact rather than a belief, and even the anti-*lobolo* investigator expressed her fear that the *lobolo* was a contributory factor to the husband's respect, but she believed that the men could be educated to see things differently. I shall return to the husbands' side later.

(2) Another consideration is that the husband's "respect" symbolizes for a girl

the "public opinion" regarding *lobolo*. No mention is made regarding *lobolo* as a prestige factor in the girl's social group and amongst her girl friends. Yet this is an important factor which I mentioned on page 34 in the words of a mature and intelligent woman educationist. The desire amongst the young brides-to-be not to be outdone by their friends, accounts to some extent for the ever rising amounts asked. "If there is no *lobolo*, they think that you are hard up for marriage, and you are therefore giving the girl away for nothing", it is said.

*Case V*: The everlasting shame and stigma attached to the low *lobolo'd* woman came out clearly when discussing a woman whose explanation of why she thought *lobolo* a bad thing had been "because it always makes you feel inferior". When this was read out at a meeting, the investigators asked at once, "How much did he pay for her?" When it was answered, "£47", they all exclaimed in one voice, "No wonder, if he paid so little for her!" The case was all the more striking since it concerned here a woman, a trained nurse, who lives with her husband and four children in a four-roomed house, and earns £22—and more than her husband. I shall later return to this.

(3) The *lobolo* is a compensation for the girl's parents. From the nurses' statements and the investigators' discussion this compensation is considered to be due in view of three losses: (a) the loss of the daughter's earning capacities, (b) the loss of her children and their *lobolo*, and (c) the loss of the money spent on her education.

As to (a), many girls, when unmarried, support their parents, and this is greatly hindered, if not rendered impossible, by her marriage. Many married women nevertheless help their parents, and in some cases it is this need which induces her "to augment my husband's wages", as she calls it, either overtly or secretly, and which often makes her lie about the full amount of her earnings. Many women have complained to me that the salaries or wages of their professions are



too well known to enable them to help their parents secretly.

As to (b), this is of very great importance in view of the high rate of what would have to be called "illegitimacy", and the frequency of the unmarried girl's parents' claim on her children. To this I shall return later.

As to (c), this furnishes an interesting example of new features of child upbringing not yet integrated in the tribal parent-child relationship. Also this later.

(4) In the discussions on this "Parents" argument, an entirely new feature came up. One of the investigators said: "We women are always the losers. We are married in community of property, and we are minors. In marriage we have little or no say over our earnings, and our husbands always think of their own family first. In divorce we always forfeit our moneys and our savings. Then, when *lobolo* has been paid, that is at least something. Of old, in cases of divorce, when the woman was in the wrong, the *lobolo* had to be paid back. But nowadays the Court decides everything, and the *lobolo* is generally forgotten. The girl then goes back home, and if there has been *lobolo* her parents will welcome her better, at least so she thinks".

The significance of this statement is enhanced by the fact that it was said by the anti-*lobolo* investigator, somewhat *à contre coeur*. Since then I have had occasion to receive corroboration of this pro-*lobolo* argument. The unreturnable *lobolo* money acts as a security link between the girl and her parents, promising her a refuge in case of marriage trouble. This is a new orientation in the old security-function of the *lobolo*-in-marriage and an important one, although not mentioned by the respondents.

(5) The belief that *lobolo* is a guarantee for marriage stability does not appear very strong and, in fact, it rests mainly on the expectation of a returnable *lobolo*. With experience that this may prove ungrounded, the argument turns the other way round. Naturally, the feeling that *lobolo* might hold up divorce is felt to be good, if there is fear that the husband might leave, but bad if

the wife would like to leave. It is an instance of the observation made above (Cases I and II) that ancient values are brought forward by whoever has advantages by them.

(6) That *lobolo* helps to pay for the wedding expenses is mentioned, significantly, by the one girl who is engaged to be married. If more girls had been in this state, it would certainly have been mentioned more often. The *lobolo* money, or at least some of it, is generally spent on the wedding expenses and it is a stronger argument in favour of *lobolo* than the investigation shows. Significantly, the anti-*lobolo* investigator has since changed her mind, exactly because of this new function of the *lobolo* money.

There are various conventions as to who pays for the white dress, the going-away costume, the church fees, the registration costs, the costumes of the wedding attendants, and the wedding feast itself. Group sanctions seem to operate most fully and compellingly in the social necessity for large and ostentatious weddings. Africans vie with one another as to the number of attendants—the bridesmaids, best men, flowergirls and pages—as to the clothes and fees required for the due celebration of the Christian marriage rites, the number of guests feasted and the wedding presents displayed. And all this culminates in having one's bridal picture taken and finally published in the Press. All this grandeur together with the high *lobolo* for the bride is duly savoured for weeks afterwards in women's gossip. The Christian marriage ceremony, far from having replaced the *lobolo* has, on the contrary, increased the need for it. In many cases, as the young men assure me, even the *lobolo* itself goes up with a European wedding. For the "real" European wedding is the Church ceremony, that is "with white dress and so on".

On the other hand, a large and grand wedding induces the guests to give big sums of money for the bridal couple and these enable the husband next morning to "cut down the high bill of *lobolo* which is before him, perhaps for many years to come . . ."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The African Eagle*, 17.9.1957, by one of its correspondents.

Thus, and paradoxically, the more ostentatious and expensive the wedding, the greater the need for a high *lobolo*, but the more likely that the wedding helps to pay towards the *lobolo*.

(7) Finally, of the other answers, the saving which the *lobolo* forces on to the bridegroom-to-be was considered an important argument in favour of it by all four investigators. From my combined experience I know how great is the young women's fear of losing their painfully won status and self-respect by marriage with what is generally called the "wrong" husband. In view of the widespread custom of having "boy friends", the lack of seriousness in the young men, and their reluctance to undertake the responsibilities of marriage, the *lobolo* provides an opportunity to test their honest intentions.

I now propose to deal with the points of view of the girls' parents and the husbands, the two parties concerned in the two most important functions mentioned by the nurses, in order to see whether these two parties can provide confirmation of the nurses' statements.

#### *The Parents' Point of View*

Two points emerge from a study of the parents' position with regard to *lobolo*. First, the parents reap all the advantages and few of the disadvantages of the *lobolo* institution. In tribal life, a daughter's *lobolo* paid for the son's. In town, it is generally not the boy's parents who pay the full amount of their son's *lobolo*, and quite often they do not contribute at all towards it. This is specially the case if the son is "first generation in civilization", as the urban Africans put it, and his parents are dependent on him for their support. Yet, the girl's parents always receive the whole payment of their daughter's *lobolo*. Secondly, economic insecurity is a very real factor in their attitudes. Like "proletarians" the world over, their only real security is in the support of their grown-up and earning children. If, with their marriage, the parents are in uncertainty whether a son or a daughter will continue his or her regular support, then the

*lobolo* money becomes their only old age insurance.

To these new urban considerations, must be added certain factors originating in ancient tribal attitudes. First, there is the prestige of age and seniority, one of the dominant notes of the Bantu social structure. Although the parents complain bitterly about its disappearance in town, the power which they have over their grown-up sons, and particularly daughters, is still considerable, and far greater than is generally known. Secondly, according to tribal law, the "illegitimate" children of a daughter "belong" to her parents, and her parents are generally far from unwilling to claim their ancient rights. Hence, if their high *lobolo* demands prevent their daughter from getting married they not only maintain their daughter's financial support, but in addition can look forward to receiving their daughters' daughters' *lobolo*. In fact, the parents are the social group most favoured by the continuance of the *lobolo*.

No wonder that the combined experiences of missionaries and social workers show that the social evils resulting from the *lobolo* institution must be laid at the door of the parents, especially amongst the lower strata of our urban population, where the financial needs are greatest, and the parent-child relationship is still according to the ancient patterns.

*Case VI:* "The cook at our creche", says a missionary, "has three illegitimate children, because her father wants £100 *lobolo* and the prospective husband simply cannot afford that much." Such cases are legion. Whether the young woman in question would be able to appeal to Court or not is irrelevant, since there are few young women indeed who would dare to go to Court against their parents.

The power of the parents and the submission of the daughters are well illustrated by the following case.

*Case VII:* Friends of mine had a woman servant, whose lover was a cook in another household. The first child she had by him died, but the second lived. Her employers suggested to her that now it might be better



to get married. Her lover agreed, and so did her parents, but the *lobolo* asked by them was far too high for the lover to be able to pay. There were protracted negotiations in which her employers, her parents and her lover, and finally a European minister of religion, who was willing to marry the young couple in his church, joined in. Although the lover and the young woman were eager to get married, and only too willing to drop the *lobolo*, the parents were adamant. The full *lobolo* had to be paid and not a penny less, especially since there was already a child. To cut a long story short, the parents won. The girl, over 21 years of age, did not dare to resist them in spite of all assurances by her employers and the European priest. Like so many other girls, she succumbed to her parents' tyranny. Worse still, they took it upon themselves to prevent all further contact between her and her lover. They forbade her to go on living with her employers, and forced her to live with them in Meadowlands. The poor girl has to leave every morning at 4 a.m. in order to be in time for her work. Whilst before she gave part of her wages to her parents, now she gives all and, needless to say, her child "belongs" to them.

Since it is commonly supposed that a girl who has already a baby finds it easier to acquire a husband, many parents are tempted to encourage their daughters' promiscuity. If then the hoped-for high *lobolo*-payer does not present himself, the girl is doomed to continue the once-taken road. Prevented by pregnancy and baby care from holding a job, even if she wanted to, she becomes totally dependent on them.

*Case VIII:* During one of my visits, a mother said that her daughter was working, while the daughter was, at that very moment, lying in bed recovering from childbirth. When I asked her, she said proudly, "Of course, I am not working. I have these . . ." pointing to her new-born baby, and to another slightly older infant lying nearby on a mattress.

The evil goes still further. Parents are sometimes indulging in lucrative and well-

planned rackets, such as here described by a missionary.

*Case IX:* "There is a boy working for Crown Mines Ltd. in their office. He came to see me the other day, saying that he was married. I had known him for a long time and I asked, 'According to Christian rites?' He said, 'No, I paid *lobolo*. £50.' Then, 6 months later, he came again; he was broken-hearted and he told me that after a while he had found out that he and his wife had got 'in a quarrelling mood' as he called it. Things went wrong between them, and then he discovered that he was the third man to be done down. The girl who was his wife had been already *lobola'd* by the father twice before him. Each time *lobolo* had been paid, and she had after a while sought a quarrel and had gone home, until her father *lobola'd* her to the next husband."

Needless to say, by tribal custom it is an offence to hold simultaneously more than one *lobolo* on a daughter<sup>1</sup>, and the case could have been taken to the Native Commissioner. Whilst the young man might have been able to retrieve his money, he would very likely have lost his wife who, as a dutiful daughter, would have sided with her parents. In this case the young husband wanted more than anything else his wife. The missionary rushed them off to a Church wedding which, if it is a registered church, includes civil registration and, since this needs a proper divorce before the father can *lobola* his daughter again, it is, therefore, in such cases a certain safeguard.

Anyone with knowledge of urban Africans knows that such cases as those cited above recur. It is difficult to find out in how far the girls' co-operation in their parents' schemes is given willingly or under pressure. It is, however, quite clear that no legislation is of any avail for which the people lack the underlying systems of beliefs and values.

In the above cases, the persistence of ancient tribal values makes it possible for the parents to exploit the *lobolo* institution to their own advantage, thereby *delaying* marriage. There are also many instances of parents using the *lobolo* to prevent marriage of their sons and daughters.

<sup>1</sup> G. M. B. Whitfield, *South African Native Law*, Cape Town, 1948, pp. 100-02.

Fear to lose the son's support is shown as the main reason in the following case.

*Case X:* Talking to a son who works in a factory, and is staying with his mother, I put the question to him why he does not get married. He seems of marriageable age.

"I wouldn't think of it—I have no money . . . Of course, I've got a girl friend!"

"Would you marry her if she'd have a baby?"

"Never!" He is now quite genuine, "It might not be mine, after all. Oh no, I wouldn't do such a thing . . . and then," this with an air of arguing again an already much argued case, "if I got married I wouldn't be able to help my parents. . . ."

"But don't you want your own home?"

"It's too hard to start. You've got to get a house first, and then the furniture . . . You need money for all that, and I haven't got any."

This particular young man gave his mother £2 15s. per week and it is doubtful if he would be able to continue this quite generous support if he had a family of his own.

In the next case, fear to lose the son's support combines with dislike of an urban daughter-in-law.

*Case XI:* Mother has three unmarried sons in the house.

"Why don't they get married?" She shrugs her shoulders, because of the hopelessness of the situation for her, and also because of the irritation the question causes her.

"They prefer to amuse themselves," she then says. "That's why! They have girl friends. That's how it is—and then, I am old; they must look after me. I can't stay alone. Who would help me?"

"But if there were a young woman in the house to help you?"

"No, it's better this way . . . and then, I don't want a daughter-in-law here." She is now quite resentful.

"But wouldn't you want grandchildren?"

"Eeeeeeh, yes!"

"Then what . . .?", but by now she is really angry.

I shall refer to these cases again, because

some of these women do have "grandchildren".

In tribal life, a mother could hardly wait till she acquired an obedient and hard-working daughter-in-law, and the status resulting from her position as mother-in-law, whilst filial obligations assured her old age. In town, daughters-in-law are becoming increasingly unwilling to submit to their mothers-in-law's "nagging", as they call it and, possibly therefore, the fact that they are rival claimants to their sons' wages stands out in stronger relief. In town, and quite often, a son's marriage means a mother's loss. There is seldom a house near to hers, and so her son goes away and sometimes far away, and there generally follows neglect and always loneliness. The high *lobolo* the son would have to pay, here reinforces a mother's arguments to keep possession of him.

Similarly, I know cases where the girl's parents, and particularly her mother if she is a widow, prefer to have full control over the entire amount of their daughter's wages, plus the expected *lobolo* of her daughters, to receiving her *lobolo* now.

*Case XII:* The woman in question is 31 years old, is employed full-time by one of the Reef municipalities, receiving a salary of nearly £30. Her parents claim her full salary and she feels unable to refuse. She cannot hold anything back from them, for they know exactly what she is earning. She has recently started gambling on the race course, because her meagre winnings from this source are the only income she can hide from her parents and she can, therefore, keep as pocket money. Being a considerable wage earner she does not lack suitors, but "each time a man wants to marry me, my parents ask more *lobolo*", she says. All my efforts to try and strengthen her into some kind of independence from her parents have so far been unavailing.

Even this brief survey of the parents' position regarding *lobolo* confirms fully its function in the battle of the older generation to maintain their ancient rights, and to find new safeguards for new insecurities. That this function is, as we have seen, largely



maladjustive, if tested against European values, is, of course, not due to *lobolo* itself or alone. No factor works singly in a situation made up of an entangled mass of interrelated causes and effects. The low wage structure, the housing shortage, the lack of seriousness in the young men, as well as their general drifting, all work together with the egoism of the parents, and the large number of lonely elderly women. In the struggle for survival, and unable to find a new relationship, the two generations cling together like people in a shipwreck.

The tribal *lobolo* was, after all, an institution expressive of a particular aspect of the Bantu social structure, namely, the Bantu attitude to females. This attitude persists in town. I have here dealt with the parents' attitude to daughters, and we shall now investigate the husbands' attitude to wives.

#### *The Husbands' Point of View*

The husbands' argument in discussions on the *lobolo* most frequently runs like this.

"Would you consider your coat (or jersey, or jacket) to be yours, if you hadn't paid for it?" It is a rhetorical question to which no reply is required, and the men generally continue, "Well then, it is the same with one's wife". The husband's comparison of his wife with garments does not seem to be confined to urban husbands. Dr. Agatha Schmidt, a German ethnologist, mentioned that the men in the various tribes studied by her, often use this comparison, saying, for instance, "A woman is like a dress".

The nurses' "value" argument seems to reflect this general male attitude. It would then appear that the men's sense of "belonging" cannot be made operative except by the idea of property for which one has paid. The husband's pride in a wife is still, as it would seem, very much based on "having paid for her", and will inevitably be greater, if he has paid a higher price for her.

The husband in town, then, seems to need this feeling of "owning" or "possessing" his wife—all the more so since the loss of his tribal functions—vital functions which he has not yet been able to replace by new ones

—as well as the humiliations of the colour bar in all its aspects, his restricted earning capacities, the increasing independence of the women and their growing status as persons in their own right, have given the men a sense of their own futility and uselessness. If he has paid *lobolo*, his wife's advanced ways, her earnings, her public activities and status, "belong" to him. Her very independence is "his", and it all goes to buttress his tottering ego. Moreover, if he has paid *lobolo*, he feels himself justified—according to the new urban conventions—to dispose of her earnings. He can still, as the women say, "lay down the law", and be master in his own house.

This, in many an urban marriage, *lobolo* gives the husband a much needed confirmation of his male superiority, and this again, in the polarity of the relationship between the sexes, gives the often rebelliously inclined urban woman a feeling of security.

Some marriages of younger professional couples who, for economic reasons, waived the *lobolo* are known to me, and inferiority feelings abound. One example must suffice to illustrate what seems rather an "impressionistic" statement.

*Case XIII:* The young woman in question is 31 and a B.A.Soc.Sc. She fell in love with a boy who was in his last year at the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work. She had wanted to postpone marriage till he had finished his studies. Although she as a University graduate would always earn more than he, he would at least be earning also. But he "insisted so much", and one day she arrived at her work and sprang the surprise that she had married. She waived the *lobolo* because "he couldn't afford it", and the wedding party because it was "a waste of money". Feeling slightly ashamed of this, she had not said anything to her colleagues at work, and these took it rather badly. During their engagement she had already sometimes helped him financially with minor expenses such as train fares, and she had consented to get married mainly for the reason that she would be able to help him less obtrusively when they had a common

budget. For this reason also she married in community of property, so that he would be less conscious of being the lesser earner, and she waived the safe-guards of ante-nuptial contract.

They lived with his mother, partly because they could not at once get a house and partly because his mother insisted. When she was transferred to one of the Reef towns where a better paid job was offered her, she tried to get a house there, but, since he was not employed in the same town, there seemed little hope of a house. From the beginning her mother-in-law "caused difficulties". Since no *lobolo* had been paid, she told her son that his wife "did not really belong to him", and, since without *lobolo* she could not really assert her tribal claims on her daughter-in-law, she told her son that his young wife was "too independent" and "disobedient". She resisted all her son's attempts to find a house for him and his wife, saying that he was her "sole support", and "what would become of me?" The young husband who was "already from the first days of the marriage, moody", was torn between two loyalties.

Then there was the burglary. One night while in bed, the young couple were burgled and everything was taken from them. After that he began to blame himself that "he had not been able to defend me". He now feels he has no right "to own me", and when I saw her last, he had started drinking.

Another related factor is what was well expressed by one of the most highly qualified African men in Johannesburg. He said: "When *lobolo* has not been paid, they do not really know whether they are married or not". What he meant is this. In a *lobolo*-marriage both partners know the required behaviour, for this was laid down by tribal wisdom centuries ago. Both partners know their respective duties and rights, and this is the basis of mutual respect. In a union without *lobolo*, the partners are lost in a network of confusing and only half-understood conventions of a vaguely Western type, and there is no precedent of time-honoured and custom-sanctioned behaviour. Husband and wife are like actors in an unrehearsed play. *Lobolo* is the only element

which "makes" a marriage. It is that by which, emotionally, the urban marriage is recognized as basically the same institution as of old.

For the men it is that which distinguishes a "wife" from a "girl friend". In the large number of unions, not legalized according to either of the systems of law, this is a necessary function. Missionaries confirm, moreover, that in a marriage without *lobolo*, even though the marriage has been entered upon by Common Law, the husband finds it difficult if not impossible to feel any responsibility for the children. Similarly, if he has not "paid for" his wife, he is often inclined to neglect her, for instance when she is ill.

For the women, only *lobolo* can give them the "feel" of being really and truly married. A wife knows she "belongs" to him, because "he has paid for me". Only *lobolo* makes her truly part of his life, and subservient to his interests. If *lobolo* has not been paid, or not been paid in full, many a woman denies her husband any say over her children.

All this applies, naturally, to the bulk of the population, and there are exceptions amongst the most highly advanced couples. Yet, one cannot be too sure, for in a marital crisis or a big quarrel, beliefs and values which had been considered left behind, may again appear on the surface.

Thus in the new marital relationships of our town, *lobolo* seems to fulfil a new function as a marriage stabilizer of an as yet very shakily based European marriage concept which has to be tried out by the partners against the heaviest odds.

### *Lobolo as National Symbol*

It is exactly amongst the more highly educated and politically advanced Africans that *lobolo* has come to assume an entirely new function.

In all the fruitless discussions on *lobolo* between Africans and Europeans, there is always a moment when the Africans will say: "White people are white people, and have white people's customs. Africans have their own. The European will never understand the African. It's no use trying to explain, or even trying to understand each other . . ."



Here we touch upon *lobolo* as a symbol of Africanism.

When an article appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation* (Feb. 16th 1957) entitled, "The Fight against Slavery", in which Brian Carney mentioned the bride-price in the context of "slave-brides", there promptly followed a protesting letter signed by Omobolanle Akpata, a Nigerian girl with a London address. In it she wrote that the term "bride-price", was not applicable to *lobolo*, "This [the *lobolo* money] is done mainly to keep the age-long tradition, and not to buy the bride . . .". The European custom of dowry, she wrote, similarly does not make the bridegroom into a "slave-bridegroom". Neither, she continued, does the *lobolo* make the bride into a slave. "This is one of those problems emanating from people trying to substitute English phrases for things that are purely Nigerian."

*Case XIV:* Recently, two young people belonging to well-known families, became engaged. The girl's father, with obvious pride and pleasure, explained to me the whole protracted ceremony in which the girl is asked in marriage by the boy's family's emissaries, the *lobolo* is finally fixed after prolonged *pourparlers*, as well as the accompanying presents. He explained how wonderful it was to enact such ancient African protocol and how much enjoyment everyone had found in it.

Here the money transaction and the old African ritual give a pattern upon which the two families can become acquainted. This getting to know each other was here desired and consciously fostered, and without the *lobolo* there would be no easy form to be found for such a meeting. It functions like the European first dinner between the future parents-in-law.

Amongst the nurses, this "Custom" argument was used nine times, it was the third in numerical importance, in favour of *lobolo*. From the answers it cannot be inferred whether it arose out of a simple, unquestioning acceptance of what was supposed to be "done" or whether it came from a new conscious re-adoption of an old institution.

Since I was not aware of the importance of this distinction at the time, I pursued the matter no further.

Out of the wreckage of the tribal past, one institution has survived, and could survive, because it never met with prohibitive legislation nor a well determined common policy from the churches. Although many experts have written against it, *lobolo* has remained free from associations of "barbarism" and "savagery" with which other tribal institutions have become marked. Hence even educated Africans, Westernized Africans who would turn away from age-sets, initiation schools, polygyny, war dances and magic, could remain *lobolo*-adherents without feeling "backward" and "primitive". Thus, *lobolo* was there, ready and waiting, to remind Africans of their African origin, and not only that, but to be accepted purposely as the one institution that connects that strange new person, the modern African, with his historical past.

As such *lobolo* has a new function to fulfil in this nascent society. In the necessary process of re-Africanization, in which Africans must rediscover their lost soul, *lobolo* is becoming the rallying point. It is becoming a sign of the African distinctiveness, a symbol of African solidarity, of what Leopold Sedar Senghor, the great modern African poet calls, "négritude".

Concluding, and although my findings may be of a kind that, at least for a moment, cannot be supported by statistical evidence, I would like to submit that the urban *lobolo* as *lobolo*-in-marriage appears to show the following functions:

(1) The old function, giving the husband the rights of fatherhood over his wife's children is still existent, particularly amongst the less detribalized Africans. (Illustrative evidence has been given in Cases I and IV). Even amongst more urbanized Africans, it may still be an important element, especially in moments of marital crisis, in supporting the husband's family's claim to the children (illustrative evidence in Case III).

(2) The old function, of bringing about a connection between two families, may again

achieve a new significance, particularly amongst the most highly urbanized and most stable urban families (illustrative evidence in Case XIV).

(3) It gives stability and pattern, both greatly needed, in the emotional insecurity of urban marriage. As to the husbands, it enforces respect for their wives, and responsibility for their children. As to prospective husbands, it affords the possibility of distinguishing between a wife and a girl-friend, between a marriage and a liaison. It is a greatly needed test of a suitor's honest intentions and his capacity as a future provider. The insecurity of biological fatherhood requires confirmation by *lobolo* of his cultural father-rights. In the decline of male self-confidence it is a seal of male superiority, and it anchors the often rebellious and fickle woman to her home.

(4) It represents for the girl's parents a greatly needed old age insurance against the insecurity of old age and the decreasing sense of filial obligations. In this function it fills the void existing in town by the lack of old age homes, the inadequacy of old age

pensions and the insufficiency of saving capital, especially amongst the older immigrant population.

(5) It is a measure of the girl's value and the girl's family's social status. In this function, the money of the *lobolo* replaces the cattle as establisher and confirmer of status.

(6) It pays for the wedding expenses, the brunt of which is generally borne by the girl's parents. The necessity for a large wedding is again a status requirement.

(7) It acts as a security link between the wife and her own home and people. With frequent divorce, separation and desertion, this is an important factor and a consequence of the fact that the *lobolo* money can, as a general rule, not be reclaimed.

(8) It is becoming, especially amongst the most urbanized and politically conscious urban Africans—here possibly stripped of all its former and present functions—a symbol of being African and proud of it.

In a later paper I propose to deal with the new features of urban *lobolo*.

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TABLE

33 Respondents: Lobolo is "a good thing"

15 Respondents: Lobolo is "a bad thing"

REASONS VALUE	No. of times stated	Specimen answers	No. of times stated	Specimen answers
	18	"You could imagine a man getting you cheaply, and kicking you about." "One does not value what one gets for nothing." "A husband will not ill-treat you when he has paid for you." "They feel they must struggle to get something of value." "Anything you have sweated for, you value more than a free gift." "A man won't respect you, if he did not pay." "If it did not exist, many men would neglect their wives."	6	"The man feels he's bought you, and this is why he will ill-treat you." "The man feels you've been bought, in some cases he even says so. Since he can never give you enough to buy you, he should pay nothing." "I don't like being bought. I do not see the necessity. I think that is why sometimes a wife is badly treated by her husband. He thinks he has bought you."
PARENTS	12	"Your parents have brought you up and paid for your education." "It is a little consolation, because you leave them." "Parents must have something, as you will be leaving them for good. A man, after marriage, always clings to and supports his own family, and you cannot do anything any more for your own." "After marriage all money goes to your in-laws."	4	<i>Parents</i> : "Parents claim to have educated you, but the boy's parents have also educated him." <i>Parents-in-law</i> : "If the man has paid lobolo, everyone has a say in your life." "One is forever in the hands of one's parents-in-law, and his people always have a say in the running of the house." "You are forced to stay with your in-laws, and if you are unwilling they say lobolo has been paid and you must do as you're told."
CUSTOM	9	"It is our custom. It is funny to marry without." "It is traditional." "It is expected and accepted by everybody."	—	
GUARANTEE	2	"A husband cannot leave you so easily if he has paid lobolo." "A man cannot play around with you, he will know he is losing his money."	3	"Lobolo is no guarantee for a good marriage." "Though lobolo is paid, yet divorce arises; with our fathers it meant something." "The husband says you can't run away, because I have paid lobolo for you. When quarrels come, the man claims back his lobolo, and your parents may not have it any more."
WEDDING EXPENSES	1	"The money serves to finance the wedding expenses which I could not afford."	—	
MARRIAGE EXPENSES	—		3	"With lobolo all savings go to the parents, and the couple has nothing to start marriage with."
OTHER REASONS	6	"It introduces a relationship between the two parties." "It creates better understanding and living." "Most of our men are poor, they must first show that they can raise the money." "Because our parents are still in the stone age."	5	"It is useless, some fathers take the cattle and sell them, and nothing is left." "Once a man believes in lobolo, he is inclined to want more wives."
TOTAL No. OF REASONS	48		21	

## NOTES AND NEWS

### INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN SEMINARS IN SOCIAL STUDIES

The International African Institute, in collaboration with a number of centres of research and higher education in Africa, is to arrange a series of four international seminars in tropical Africa over the period 1958-61. It has been generously granted funds for this purpose by the Ford Foundation. The seminars will consider and report on social research problems of significance for further social, economic, and educational development in Africa. They will also provide opportunities for research workers and other scholars holding posts in various parts of Africa to establish closer contact with each other and with their colleagues in Europe and America, and to exchange views on problems and methods of research. From fifteen to twenty persons will participate in each seminar.

It has been agreed that the successive seminars should be held in different regions, and offers for facilities for holding them have been made by the East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere College, Uganda; the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College, Ibadan, with the collaboration of I.F.A.N. and the University of Dakar; the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, with the collaboration of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute; and by the University of Lovanium, with the collaboration of I.R.S.A.C.

The selection of subjects for study at the several seminars will seek to ensure that they will together cover a reasonably wide range of problems and methods, and that there will not be any undue overlapping of subject-matter and participants. Selection will also have regard to the interest and importance of a subject, both theoretical and practical, and its suitability for stimu-

lating further research and, in particular, for promoting a greater exchange of news and information among scholars working in many different areas.

### RESEARCHES IN THE BELGIAN CONGO, RUANDA-URUNDI AND UGANDA<sup>1</sup>

The Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences is glad to be able to give the following information on the archeological excavations and the anthropological surveys carried out under the direction of M. J. Hiernaux, Professor at the University of Elizabethville.

#### *Archeology*

An excavation made on the shores of Lake Kisale (Katanga Province), a site located by M. Maesen of the Musée du Congo Belge and worked by Messrs Hiernaux, Nenquin and De Buyst, has yielded a cemetery of a more ancient culture than the existing one. So far some fifty tombs have been brought to light. The skeletons are accompanied by an abundance of funeral objects, consisting of pottery, iron and copper articles and beads. The subjacent gravel is rich in chipped stones of the Middle Stone Age.

In Ruanda, Mrs Maquet and M. Hiernaux have worked several sites of the Metal Age. Two cultures of this period, of earlier date than the existing ones, have been brought to light, one of these corresponding to that previously found at Kivu and showing an association of pottery of the "dimple-based" type, of bricks and signs of metallurgical activity.

The excavation worked by the last-mentioned investigators at Kibiro (Uganda) on the east shores of Lake Albert has yielded a three-metre thickness of "kitchen middens"

<sup>1</sup>Published with acknowledgements to C.C.T.A.—C.S.A., by kind permission of the Director of the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research, Department of Education, Arts and Science, Pretoria.



at the base of which is a type of pottery with very original decoration differing considerably from that in existence.

### *Anthropology*

A general survey of growth is being carried out by Messrs Hiernaux and Vandervoort at Elizabethville and in Ruanda, where

Mlle Petit-Maire is carrying out parallel researches on feminine growth.

Further, an anthropological study, by tribe of origin, of the black population of Elizabethville has been launched in liaison with the ethno-sociological survey of Mrs A. Lebeuf and Mrs Pouleur.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

The Editorial Committee gratefully acknowledges receipt of the publications listed below, during the period 1 November 1957, to 28 February 1958.

Reviews are published as circumstances permit, but no undertaking can be given that every book received will be reviewed in *African Studies*

- BANTON, MICHAEL: *West African City—A study of tribal life in Freetown*. Oxford University Press for International African Institute. London and Cape Town. 1957.
- BOHANNAN, PAUL: *Justice and Judgment among the Tiv*. Oxford University Press for International African Institute. London and Cape Town. 1957.
- BRELSFORD, W. V.: *The Tribes of Northern Rhodesia*. Government Printer. Lusaka. n.d.
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- DAMMANN, ERNST: *Studien zum Kwangali Grammatik*. Cram, de Gruyter & Co., Hamburg, Germany. 1957.
- EDNEY, E. B.: *The Survival of Animals in Hot Deserts*. Oxford University Press, London & Cape Town. 1957.
- ENGSTROM, TOR: *Notes sur les modes de construction au Soudan*. Statens Etnografiska Museum, Stockholm. 1957.
- EPSTEIN, A. L.: *Politics in an Urban African Community*. Manchester University Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Lusaka. 1958.
- MCCALLIEN, CATH, and PETER STREVEIS: *English Speech—Teachers' Book One*. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., London. 1957.
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bwamba : A Structural-Functional Analysis of a Patrilineal Society.**

EDWARD H. WINTER. W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., Cambridge, for the East African Institute of Social Research. n.d. [1956]. x+264 pp., 7 diagrams, 9 plates, map, 3 appendices. 30s.

Bwamba is a mountainous, formerly inaccessible area in western Uganda. Its inhabitants, the patrilineal Amba, are of particular interest since they represent a transition between the Bantu of the Ituri forest and those of the Inter-lacustrine kingdoms to the east. The Amba are primarily cultivators, hunting and herding being relatively unimportant. Recently they have taken to growing coffee, cotton and dry rice as cash crops.

Politically the Amba fall into the category that the authors of *African Political Systems*<sup>1</sup> labelled "stateless societies"; for their system of authority is built into their kinship, particularly their lineage, organization, and there is recourse to arbitration and the feud when persons of different lineages are involved in disputes.

The tenuous relationships between lineages together with the traditional unimportance of livestock and the absence of other durable goods have accentuated the problem facing all markedly patrilineal societies, viz., acquiring for a given lineage the reproductive powers of women of other lineages. In the past the Amba overcame this problem by the exchange of women, i.e., a man acquired a wife by providing her lineage with his sister or daughter as a bride for his wife's father or brother. During the last twenty years this system has been displaced by one of bridewealth—in goats and, increasingly, in money. While women exchange had the disadvantage of causing the dissolution of two marriages when only one of them was unsuccessful, it had the advantage of maintaining a balance of status between the

negotiating parties—in contrast to the bridewealth system which places the bride's group at an advantage. In any event, in view of Lévi-Strauss's recent insistence that different types of social organization represent but different solutions to the same fundamental problem, the exchange of women<sup>2</sup>, it is interesting to have Dr Winter's thorough documentation of the transition from blatant women exchange to one of its subtler forms.

Winter has chosen not only an interesting tribe but also an interesting method of presenting his findings. By concentrating attention on group organization and by fully describing relationships between standardized roles he makes it possible to test and illustrate some of the hypotheses put forward in the necessarily speculative and exploratory comparative studies like *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*<sup>3</sup> and *African Political Systems*<sup>4</sup>. Thus he records (p. 26n) that "practically none of the patterns which [Gluckman] believes to be associated with a strongly patrilineal organization such as [a child's belonging to its *pater* rather than its *genitor*], rare divorce, levirate, sororate, etc., are to be found among the Amba". And, impressed by the complicated manner in which Amba lineages are woven together into an ordered, even if a stateless, society, he pays special attention to inter-lineage (and this usually means inter-village) links, such as cultural homogeneity (p. 160), trade and blood brotherhood (pp. 164 ff.), the interrelationships brought about by women (pp. 174 ff.), exogamy (pp. 193 ff.) and dances and ritual (pp. 168–69). There seems ample justification for his conclusion (p. 205) that the loosely organized tribes exemplified by the Amba are of greater interest to the political theorist than the great Inter-lacustrine kingdoms "owing to the great contrast which they offer to the more familiar types, and the challenge which they offer to analysis".

<sup>1</sup> Edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard. London, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté*, Paris, 1949, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde. London, 1950.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*



Chapter XI, which shows how the classificatory kinship system facilitates the falsification of actual genealogies into what Winter calls "social genealogies", effectively dispels the notion that a kin-tied society is necessarily one lacking in social mobility.

Winter provides us with useful aids to effective analysis by refining certain of the concepts commonly used in comparative sociology. Thus (p. 17) he dispenses with some of Fortes's difficult lineage terminology and substitutes "second generation lineage", "third generation lineage", etc., according to the generation one has to go back to in order to delineate the group concerned. On p. 19 he illustrates two principles which, while not original with him, are encountered all too rarely in anthropological writing, i.e., firstly, that in kinship analysis the differences between terms of address and terms of reference are often highly illuminating; and, secondly, that a group such as a lineage is more differentiated when viewed by its own members than by those outside it. And on p. 82 he gives a neat explanation for lineage segmentation (or, as he rather laboriously calls it, "a very radical change in the direction of disintegration"). This is to the effect that the father as lineage head can be effective as an arbiter between his quarrelling sons "because, in addition to his inherent authority, there is the fact that he is in a structurally neutral position since he is related to all his sons in the same degree". The son who succeeds him, on the other hand, suffers from the "ultimate weakness . . . that he can never become the ancestor of his own brothers". Thus without his father's structural neutrality he cannot hold the group together.

In general the author's approach is a happy blend of American sociology (without the Parsonic barrier of incomprehensibility) and British social anthropology. In regard to theory one could have wished for a treatment nearer the Hollywood extreme of overstating the obvious. This applies to the book as a whole—it lacks a simple plot or central theme—and to certain of its chapters, for instance, the one on the supernatural and, to a less degree, the one on witchcraft, in

both of which the author is not sufficiently explicit about the sociological hypotheses he wishes to illustrate.

M. G. MARWICK

**Bantu Bureaucracy. A study of Integration and Conflict in the Political Institutions of an East African People.** LLOYD A. FALLERS. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., for East African Institute of Social Research. xiv+283 pp., 8 maps, XIII plates, XX tables. 30s.

This is a study in terms of Parsons's concepts of conflict and integration of the political evolution of the Soga from a number of small, autonomous and often mutually hostile kingdoms, with a traditional system of the centralized state type, into a politically unified modern civil service bureaucracy incorporated into the British Protectorate of Uganda.

The Soga are a prosperous community which combines a cash economy based on cotton-growing with a subsistence economy and has been able to adjust to the new influences of Western civilization with a minimum of change in the village way of life. The traditional Soga state consisted of a number of dispersed clans and lineages with rulership of the state in the hands of one lineage of the royal clan. This kinship system lacked age-distinctions and clearly defined relative status. Authority was in the hands of the lineage as a group, not of particular members of the group. The chief was only 'primus inter pares'; but he appointed as his administrative staff and rulers over districts commoner clients bound to him by personal ties. The state was thus organized on the three principles of patrilineal kinship, ascribed rank and patron-client relationship.

The corporate lineage, was, it is argued, structurally antagonistic to the hierarchical centralized state organization on a client-patron pattern. The ruler played two antagonistic roles as did the village headman;

and a commoner-client's position within the state was liable to distort his position within the lineage, thus disrupting the operation of the lineage in terms of its own rules. These structural strains (combined, the author admits, with the simplicity of the economic and technical base which made it impossible for the ruler to monopolize armed force) led to frequent usurpations, which generally involved the assistance of neighbouring states, especially the Ganda. This produced a kind of political opportunism, a fluidity in the system which made it vulnerable to outside penetration and change.

When at the end of the 19th century the British took over, they made no fundamental changes at first. The introduction of the 'bwesengeze' system, differentiating between personal estate in which chiefs could demand personal tribute and the 'butongole' section of their area in which they were mere administrators carrying out the directions of the British, did much to make British rule acceptable to the chiefs. Profits from cotton in their personal estates led to the growth of a chiefly élite identifying itself to a large extent with the new forces.

After the 1930's, however, a series of fundamental changes were made which rapidly transformed the whole system into a civil service bureaucracy. The 'bwesengeze' system was abolished; the hereditary basis of chieftainship disappeared, the chief becoming a civil servant liable to be moved from one area to another; and formally constituted elected councils took the place of the traditional advisory councils of rulers. That these changes took place with little opposition despite the economic and other losses to the rulers is explained as probably due to the fact that these chiefs, whose wealth and prestige had so greatly increased under the new order, were now too far committed to it to turn back.

Evolution into a civil service bureaucracy has superimposed on the traditional tension between state and lineage a new modern conflict based on the structural incompatibility between the traditional system in which authority was defined in terms of

particular persons and groups and the new conception of a civil service bureaucracy where authority is universalistic, the property of an office, not a person. The author examines in considerable detail this incompatibility in the case of the village headman, the civil service chief and the European administrative officer.

The book makes stimulating reading; it gives an excellent analysis of Soga social and political structure, throws light on modern changes and tendencies and puts forward a number of interesting hypotheses. A weakness which the author himself is aware of is that the descriptive data are presented in a particular frame of reference which makes them "in the nature of the case highly selected" (p. 225). One has the impression, also, that much of the institutional conflict which is so carefully examined is purely theoretical; and that in the practical day-to-day working of the system the effects may be very different from what one is led to expect. Thus, in an example given on pp. 141-2 to illustrate the "mutual interference" of the institutions of unilineal descent and patron-client, the practical outcome is shown to be happy solution of a dispute the lineage itself had not been able to settle—surely the very opposite of 'conflict'.

EILEEN JENSEN KRIGE  
*University of Natal, Durban*

**Taalstudie bij de Basakata.** P. DE WITTE.  
Annalen van het Koninklijk Museum  
van Belgisch-Congo, Deel 10, Tervuren.  
1955. 216 pp., map.

The publishers of the Annals of the Royal Museum of the Belgian Congo are providing us with an increasing number of studies of Bantu languages in their linguistic series. It seems to be part of their policy to concentrate on recording little-known languages and dialects spoken in the Congo. De Witte's book, which is the tenth volume in the series, treats of Sakata, a language not described before.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Witte mentions three unpublished articles, one of which ("Over het Kisakata", *Aequatoria*, 13, 4, 1950), appeared before the publication of his book.



Sakata is spoken at Kutu, in the district of Lake Leopold II, near the areas in which Ntomba and Nkundo are spoken. The tribes which use the language include the **Bazá**, the **Mabéy**, the **Mbântany**, and the **Bôbay**. There are various dialectal variations, of which nineteen are included in this work.

The study is divided into three parts, *viz.* a "short linguistic sketch", a "more extensive grammar and syntax" and a comparison of dialectal forms. Four texts are appended to the second part and a number of comparative word-lists to the third part. Part III is followed by a summary in French, and the work is concluded with a discussion of loan-words and tables of "grammatical elements".

The author uses the "Africa" orthography, but prefers to write his examples phonetically. This is perhaps a wise decision, as his notes on the phonology show that the language has an unusually complicated phonemic structure, and the reader may, therefore, not always be able to interpret phonemically written examples. Tones are indicated throughout, and the writer, like most of his countrymen, takes care to describe the tonological behaviour of all the constructions discussed. His method of word-division, which may be termed semi-conjunctive, is essentially the same as those used for Luba, Nkundo, and other Congo languages.

It is evident that this language is spoken near the borders of the Bantu area. It has many characteristics which strike the student of South African Bantu languages as strange and even as un-Bantu. It will not be amiss to point out some of the features which are not found in languages nearer home.

Sakata has an unusually complicated vowel system. The author postulates five phonemes, *viz.* /a/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /ɔ/, and /ʌ/.<sup>1</sup> Among the realizations of these phonemes we find such strange forms as [ə], [ə̃], [œ], [y] and [ʌ]. (The latter phone is said to be pronounced somewhat like *u* in Dutch *put*.) It seems that some of the phonological oppositions are neutralized in [ə̃]. Moreover, most of the phonemes have nasalized variants, even in word-final position. It

would be a difficult task to determine the relationship between Ur-Bantu and Sakata vowels. B. /*\*i*/ is, for example, sometimes realized as [ɛ] and sometimes as [i], whereas B. /*\*i*/ occurs as [e]. Note, for example, the prefixes of classes 5 /i-/ , 7 /kɛ-/ and 8 /be-/.

The occurrence of the labial-velar consonant phonemes /kp/ and /gb/ indicates that we are approaching the Sudanic area. The affrication of explosives (and eventual dropping of the stop segment in the resultant affricate) in certain positions, e.g. [k] > [kx] > [x] and [g] > [gɣ] > [ɣ], is also an interesting phenomenon. Stress usually occurs on the penultimate syllable of the word, but may occasionally occur on initial syllables. Length has neither distinctive nor delimitative function, but occurs only when phonemes are reduplicated. The intervals between the distinctive pitches are said to be very slight.

In the morphology of the verb, the absence of derivative suffixes is notable. It is also found that subjectival concords are dropped in archaic speech and in the speech of old people. The shortening and contraction of roots and stems are regarded as characteristic of the language, e.g. -pə (two), -saa (three), and -táa (five).

The grammatical and phonological sketches are slight and cannot be said to be as scientific and thorough as those of other writers, like Meeussen and Coupey, who have published in the same series. De Witte's work is a compilation of data rather than a systematic treatment of the language. Nevertheless, it is a welcome addition to the existing literature on Bantu languages and a valuable source on a little-known dialect.

E. B. VAN WYK  
*University of Pretoria*

**Learn Zulu.** SIBUSISO NYEMBEZI. Shuter & Shooter, Pietermaritzburg. 1957. 151 pp. 8s. 6d.

It is not more than ten years ago that this reviewer stood in Professor C. M. Doke's study discussing available teaching materials

<sup>1</sup> Phonemes are not included in diagonals in the text.

in Zulu. In answer to the question whether there was not an urgent need for a good manual or handbook of Zulu for beginners, Professor Doke cast a hand towards a well-packed shelf of books, all of which could conceivably be classified as "Zulu manuals". His gesture was not intended as a negative reply to the question, but was meant to indicate the reaction of publishers confronted with manuscripts of Zulu manuals. For almost 70 years there has been a growing stream of books designed to teach Zulu to European beginners. During the past decade about half a dozen have made their appearance, but the need for a competitive article has placed severe restrictions on their size, quite apart from the doubtful quality of most of them. It is a fact that there is still no book adequate to the task of helping the beginner, working without the assistance of a fully qualified teacher of Zulu, to a mastery of the language. Many books aspiring to this aim can be guaranteed to lead to exasperation and complete failure.

Professor Nyembezi's book, *Learn Zulu*, is the latest addition to the lengthening shelf of Zulu manuals and an appraisal of it will be delayed while the peculiar features of the manual are enumerated and something is said of what a manual is designed to achieve. A distinction is often drawn between two main types of book devoted to language description. The terms "grammar" and "manual" are adequate to identify these two types and an attempt to distinguish between them serves at the same time to emphasize the peculiar attributes of the manual.

A grammar is aimed at describing completely and scientifically the highly complex code of signalling which a language is. The strength of a grammar lies in the simplicity, accuracy and completeness of the description. A manual, on the other hand, takes the material contained in the grammar (or as much of it as is deemed necessary) and processes it for piecemeal assimilation by the learner eager to use the particular code. Comprehensiveness of description in the grammar gives place to selection in the manual. Material for inclusion in the manual is carefully selected, as is its place in the

manual, and selection is based to a large extent on frequency of occurrence in actual speech. The aim of every manual writer should be to get the learner speaking as quickly as possible and saying the things which are most commonly said. Idiom and common usage are important ingredients and should accompany structural data in a step-by-step presentation which includes nothing not previously explained. In the grammar one level of structure after another is laid bare methodically, whereas in the manual the commonest constituents of speech are dealt with first, irrespective of their place in the structural hierarchy. Thus various aspects of the verb may well be found in every chapter in the book. Every manual should contain a restricted, carefully selected vocabulary which is integrated with the other material in the book.

A good manual may take the place of a teacher. It should *never* attempt to take the place of one or more native-speaker informants or assistants. No one has ever learned to speak a language from a book alone, nor even from a book accompanied by gramophone records. Successful foreign language learning entails many hours of contact with native speakers and manuals must be designed in recognition of this fact. Professor Nyembezi states in the preface, "Wherever possible, the help of a Zulu should be solicited in order to acquire correct pronunciation." This is too casual a dismissal of a quite vital part of learning Zulu. Many sincere efforts have come to naught because of its neglect. Every manual should presume that the beginner has a co-operative native informant ready to produce models for pronunciation drill, and a variety of expression for which no place can be found in a manual. It is the task of a manual to indicate what to extract from an informant in order to achieve rapid mastery of a wide range of expression. A successful means of achieving this, which an informant soon grasps, is the sentence frame which allows for extensive substitution of words of similar categories.

In *Learn Zulu* one would have liked to see the vowel and consonant sounds presented



in a manner which presumed the existence of a Zulu speaker at the learner's side. Lists of words and sentences with troublesome new sounds in various contexts could have been given for pronunciation drill. (Incidentally, the learner would have to hail from well north of the Tweed to have a near equivalent to the raised allophones of Zulu /o/ and /e/ in the vowels of English "boat" and "bay".)

Some of the most significant of the recent contributions of modern linguistic science have been made in the field of foreign language learning and teaching and no prospective manual writer should proceed with his task before a thorough study of Robert Lado's recently published *Linguistics Across Cultures* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1957). The lesson of modern linguistics is that new languages are not absorbed *in vacuo*. Much of foreign language learning is a process (largely unconscious) of forcing new linguistic material through the established structural framework of the mother tongue. A good manual is one that combats the weaknesses and exploits the advantages of this process of carrying over features of sound, grammar and meaning from the mother tongue to the language which is being learnt. Thus a manual of Zulu for English speakers should link the phonetically similar and structurally equatable fricatives /s/ and /z/ of English and Zulu, but, on the other hand, should strive to establish the Zulu contrast /b/ : /bh/ which is destroyed by the use of English /b/ for both. In similar fashion the fact that the difference between English "with" and "and" does not coincide with that between the adverbial prefixes *na-* and *nga-* in Zulu must be a point of prominence. Sentence frames which allow for wide substitution of verbs and adverbs are an excellent means of inculcating the latter. It follows, therefore, that the first task of the manual writer is a thorough comparison of the language to be learnt with the mother tongue of the learner, with an eye to features such as those mentioned above.

It is hardly necessary to ask whether *Learn Zulu* meets the requirements of the

manual as set out here. There is no existing manual which does, and it is unlikely that one will appear in the field of Bantu languages within quite a number of years. Not only have new ideas and techniques to be absorbed and applied by trial and error, but the resistance of publishers to manuscripts longer than 150 pages has to be overcome. Professor Nyembezi has been unfortunate in producing his manual at a time when publishers are loath to publish a volume of adequate size owing to the competition from less worthy articles. He was forced to reduce his original manuscript drastically and in its present form he has confined himself to a limited objective. It is also unfortunate that he has produced his book at a time when modern linguistics is making its impact on foreign language learning and teaching and is drawing attention to imperfections in existing methods. In discussing this, attention has inevitably been drawn to certain shortcomings of *Learn Zulu*, but it is not intended to detract from this manual as a competitor to other works in the same field.

Professor Nyembezi has succeeded in producing for the classroom in technical colleges, schools and universities an excellent, carefully chosen vocabulary which is integrated with exercises and copious examples containing much of everyday Zulu usage. The real value of the book lies in these examples and exercises, the latter being all the more useful for the key contained at the end. They will prove a godsend to the hard-pressed teacher and lecturer and this reviewer intends to make full use of them. A common fault in existing Zulu manuals is a surfeit of grammatical description, with little or no attempt to illustrate with examples from common, everyday usage. Some authors have obviously little command of colloquial Zulu and their nonsensical examples serve to amuse rather than instruct.

For the beginner working without the assistance of a qualified teacher and without prior knowledge of Bantu languages, there are many gaps and much that is likely to frustrate in *Learn Zulu*. For example, the mid vowels are stated to have "two pronunciations . . . depending on the following

vowel". No more is said. The tenses of the subjunctive and participial moods are casualties of the process of manuscript pruning and the learner is left without any ability to express a clause of time or purpose. It is felt that some indication of the omission of items of such common occurrence should have been made.

It is to be hoped that Professor Nyembezi is contemplating a "Learn Zulu II" which will cover what is omitted in the present volume. The material of *Learn Zulu* is well graded and leads quite logically to a second more advanced volume. The suggestion is offered that in a second volume, much of the grammatical description be covered by references to such works as Doke's *Text-book of Zulu Grammar* and Malcolm's *A Zulu Manual for Beginners*, and as much space as possible be devoted to examples and exercises incorporating common idiom and usage. Professor Nyembezi displays a keen perception of weak points in the existing grammatical descriptions of his mother tongue, and, where the latter are inadequate, grammatical description will, of course, be most welcome.

L. W. LANHAM

*Rhodes University, Grahamstown*

**The Royal African Company.** K. G. DAVIES. Longmans, Green & Co., London. 1957. 375 pp. 42s.

The fortunes of the English Royal African Company, from the time of its foundation in 1672 until its winding-up in 1752, rested upon the West African slave-trade. This study is not, however, concerned with the political or sociological aspects of West African slavery. It does not set out to explore the early history of European contact with or impact upon West Africa. Nor does it seek, save within its own special limits, to add to the social, political or economic history of West Africa; of those areas then descriptively known as the Gold, Slave, Ivory, Gum and Grain coasts. Mr Davies has concerned himself with the record of the

Royal African Company as a joint-stock business enterprise examined in its proper historical context. In so far as he explores the workings and connexions of the Company in West Africa it is in pursuance of his main question: Why in the face of a profound and lasting mercantile conviction of its rich potential did the Company fail? His book is a dispassionate, scholarly and well documented contribution both to our knowledge of the great seventeenth-century monopolistic joint-stock organization and the economic history of the period. At the same time his chapters entitled "The Company in Africa" and "The Company in the West Indies" will doubtless indicate to those interested source-material to be explored in a different context.

The Charter of 1672 was not the first such English monopoly to be granted in African trade. The Senegal Adventurers in 1588, the Governor and Company of Adventurers of London in 1618 and the Royal Adventurers into Africa 1660, when for the first time the slave-trade was mentioned as an objective, had all taken their turn and failed. Of the Royal Adventurers Mr Davies writes: "The whole venture was more reminiscent of an aristocratic treasure hunt than of organized business". To this one must add the Dutch wars and the international rivalry in the trade. The Royal African Company was the phoenix-too-frequent which arose from their pyre.

In the eighty years of its existence, we are told, the Royal African Company "exported goods to the value of £1½ million, despatched 500 ships to Africa, delivered 100,000 slaves to the Plantations, imported 30,000 tons of sugar, coined more than half a million guineas and built or rebuilt eight forts on the African coast", achievements unique in the slave-trade. Yet judged by the only relevant criterion for a business organization—the making of money—the Company was a failure. Mr Davies sets out to discover why. He examines in turn the organization of credit and company finance during the period, the connexion with the Government, monopoly versus free trade, the able and hardworking mercantile character of the



management at home, the far less satisfactory nature of that abroad, especially on the West African coast, and the heavy unavoidable expenses the trade involved. He examines the Company's difficulties in the West Indies and the intimate dependence of the slave-trade upon sugar prices—a factor beyond the Company's control—and the Planter's insistence on long-term credit, which to the Company at times, must have appeared equally hard to bear.

Only once in its chequered history did the Company manage to send a large enough volume of goods to Africa to ensure the purchase of sufficient slaves to supply the Plantations. Yet each year it was exporting the equivalent of its whole capital, and the turnover, spread as it had to be over three continents, was exceedingly slow. Mr Davies finds that the Company's "good years", by which he does not, of course, mean that it made satisfactory profits, were those between 1672 and 1689, and in substance that the rest of its history is, as it were, a postscript. Even the prospects of deriving benefit from the Spanish *Asiento* after the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 proved chimerical.

To the last thirty-nine years of its existence after the Company's reconstruction in 1713, the author devotes only two pages. He notes that the Duke of Chandos appears to have put new spirit and money into the Company. He does not tell us how and why. One is left wondering why that very shrewd and eminently successful "placeman", the former Paymaster and protégé of Marlborough, should have invested so much so late. The Company was, it is true, only one among many such interests of Chandos who included the East India, the South Sea, the Sun Life Insurance, the Royal Exchange Assurance and the York Buildings Companies and many mining and building speculations in his investments. Still, according to his own estimate in 1740, found in the Huntington Library Mss, Chandos lost £125,000 in the Royal African Company. He only resigned from the governing body in 1725, the same year in which he tried to persuade Walpole to make the South Sea Company

contract with the Royal African for the supply of slaves over a number of years.

It is a pity in this reviewer's opinion, that nowhere in the book does a single personality or an example of the clash of personalities and policies—which must have occurred—emerge from or give colour to the analysis. The book, notwithstanding its scholarship, is unnecessarily rather heavy reading, while the particular form of its structure tends to leave one with the impression of a certain amount of repetition. It is, nevertheless, a considerable contribution to the economic history of the period.

R. B. BALLINGER

*University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg*

**Notes sur les modes de construction au Soudan.** TOR ENGESTROM. Statens Etnografiska Museum, Smärre Meddelanden Nr. 26. Stockholm. 1957. 41 pp., map and 50 figs. 6 Swedish Crowns.

In 1948 the Bureau des Etudes Humaines of the Office de la Recherche Scientifique Coloniale published a map, together with brief notes, of the distribution of house types in West Africa and an appeal was launched for more detailed information of regional types. This monograph by Tor Engeström is an important contribution to such a study for it represents the results of field work in the upper course of the Niger, carried out in 1953–1954 by the author and his wife.

As a result Engeström has isolated what he regards as the traditional type of Sudanese flat-roofed building, the walls of which are constructed around a timber framework. The uprights are encased in clay, although in certain instances the curved surface of the timber is still discernible, and the horizontal members are similarly enclosed. The panels so formed between the timbers are recessed to provide in effect a "post-and-pan" construction of one or more tiers. This construction he regards as being of pre-Islamic origin and he suggests that it may have had its beginning in the houses of the chiefs of



Mandé. Its present distribution is largely in the former Mandé area and its antiquity is established by El Bakri's account of Ghana in 1053. The Islamic geographer described the city as being divided into two sections; one occupied by Moslem teachers and traders, the other by the ruler and his followers. The houses grouped around the royal court in the pagan section of the city were constructed of stone with a framework of acacia wood.

Three other types of flat-topped house are recognized. Under the heading of the "New Sudan Style" are included buildings of the traditional style modified by Islamic and other introduced influences, such as semi-circular, oggee and multi-lobed arches and vaulted loggias. The Djénné style is characterized by having a doorway flanked by pillars which continue up to the top of the façade and which support a lean-to roof over the entrance to provide a kind of porch. Along the top of the façade the space between the pillars is occupied by a series of moulded balusters terminating in clay cones. The Timbuctu style differs from the traditional Sudan style only in the fact that the upright pillars do not continue to the top of the façade and that the sunken panels in the upper row are narrower than those below.

Engeström sees in the Dogon ginnas of Sangha a survival of the traditional pre-Islamic style. He suggests that political and religious pressure resulting from the growth of the nominally Mohammedan state of Melle in the thirteenth century compelled the Dogon to migrate to the Central Nigerian Plateau and that they continued to build in their traditional style after they arrived at their new home.

Certain features of Dogon building do not, however, belong to the flat-roofed, panelled Sudan construction, particularly the round buildings used as kitchens, granaries and as rooms for the wives of the rulers. Engeström contends that the mixture of rectangular and rounded forms in Dogon building may represent the final phases of types encountered by different sections of the Dogon during their migration; a thesis supported by the different dialects spoken by the Dogon.

It is possible, however, that the ginnas, with their circular kitchens, represent a fusion of the architectural styles of the two main groups existing in Ghana before the rise of Melle; namely, the Lybico-Berber and the Negro peoples. The rectangular, flat-roofed, panelled construction may represent the Berber element and the circular construction, which is noticeably confined to the kitchen and women's quarters, may represent the Negro element.

One other feature of the ginna which is not found in the traditional pre-Islamic dwelling elsewhere is the use of chevron pattern in the construction of the walls. Although Engeström suggests that this decoration was probably employed by the Dogon prior to their migration, he feels that it originated with the Berbers of the Sahara and North Africa. It is impossible, at our present state of knowledge, to attribute the use of chevron wall patterns, formed by leaving triangular gaps, to any particular source of origin. It is, of course, a type of decoration well known in the ruins of Southern Rhodesia. Dr Caton-Thompson illustrates a Zanzibar minaret, built in 1860, which is decorated with a double chevron, and a few years ago I saw a Yao mosque at Kota Kota, on the shores of Lake Nyasa, with chevron decoration, almost identical with that of the Dogon, incorporated in its walling. It is an architectural feature of considerable antiquity and probably originated in North Africa but its actual distribution must await more detailed knowledge of African folk-building.

Although many of the theories advanced by Engeström can only be confirmed by further historical studies, his classification of house types for the upper Niger area affords an extremely useful and apparently sound basis for subsequent work. The production of this monograph is of the usual high standard set by the Statens Etnografiska Museum for this series of publications and the illustrations, although small, depict the various features quite clearly. The lack of ground-plans is, however, a serious omission and the various styles appear to have been formulated entirely on the character of the



façades. The ground-plan would probably help considerably in the comparison of different styles, showing whether they were derived from a common source or represent different building traditions. Many more studies of this nature are required before folk-building can be utilized fully as a means of elucidating the migrations of African peoples and, as so many of the older building styles are fast falling into disuse, it is a matter of considerable urgency. Engeström's monograph is all the more welcome on this account.

JAMES WALTON  
*Education Department, Maseru*

- A. Sparrman's Ethnographical Collection from South Africa. I. & J. RUDNER.** Statens Etnografiska Museum, Smärre Meddelanden Nr. 25. Stockholm. 1957. 28 pp., 12 text figures. 4.50 Swedish Crowns.

Andrew Sparrman travelled in South Africa in 1772 and again from 1775 to 1776, during which time he made a small collection of ethnographic objects, which were later deposited in the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden. There they were seen in 1953 by Ione and Jalmar Rudner, who have published a descriptive account of them, prefaced by a short account of Sparrman's voyages and the people from whom he collected the specimens.

The fifteen items are listed according to Sparrman's inventory and each is followed by a description and a short discussion of what is known from Sparrman's own writing and from other literature, of the use of such objects. Sparrman travelled from the Cape as far east as the Great Fish River, where he first met the Xhosa, but most of the items in the collection are attributed to Hottentots, especially the Gonaqua, who lived in close contact with the Xhosa.

In the museums of Europe there are many ethnographical collections which were made in South Africa in the early years of its exploration and settlement. Some have the

added value of having been collected by well-known travellers like Sparrman, and described in their published works. All are of immense interest and importance to South Africa, where museum collections are scarcely a hundred years old. As far as I know this is the only description to have been published of any of these collections, and South African ethnologists are greatly in the debt of the Rudners.

E.M.S.

**Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis Côte Occidentale d'Afrique du Sud Marocain au Gabon per Duarte Pacheco Pereira (vers 1506-1508).** R. MAUNY. Publication No. 19 of the Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa, Bissau. 1956. 197 pp., maps, illus.

This publication contains on one side of the page the original Portuguese text and on the other an admirable French translation of it. The absence of the Portuguese text in the English translation by Kimble is a serious defect. Thus the Portuguese text as given by Mauny runs as follows (p. 60). "e aquy podem tomar e comprar muita came e milho pera mantimento e feyxões e augua e lenha, mas há mester que comtentem os negros." Kimble's (1937, 86) translation runs: "Here one can buy much meat and maize and beans and water, but not without the goodwill of the natives." A comparison with Mauny's translation shows that Kimble skimmed his task. Mauny's translation runs: "Là on peut prendre et acheter beaucoup de viande, de *milho* comme provision, de *feyxões*, de l'eau, du bois, mais il est nécessaire de donner satisfaction aux Nègres." Now note that Mauny does not translate either *milho* or *feyxões*. Kimble translates these two words as maize and beans. But while *milho* is today one of the many Portuguese names for maize, an American crop, *feyxões* stands for haricot beans, also an American crop. Kimble makes no comment. Mauny has a note on each. About the word *milho*, he (1956, 175) writes: "Il doit s'agir de mil

et non de mais (milho zaburro) à cette époque trop proche de la découverte de l'Amerique, d'où le maïs fut introduit en Afrique." For the other word he adds: "Pour la même raison *feyxôes* ne peut représenter les haricot (*feijão en portugais moderne*) mais plutôt les niébés (*Vigna sinensis*) ou les *voandzou* (*Voandzeia subterranea*)." Now Mauny agrees that *milho zaburro* is Portuguese for maize, consequently he is faced with the awkward situation that a Portuguese contemporary of Periera, one Valentim Fernandes, in 1506 spoke of *milho zaburro* as the cereal of the Negroes in the places where Periera says the Negro grew *milho*. One must therefore conclude that, in spite of the date 1506 being so near to the discovery of America by Columbus, maize was a staple crop on the west coast of Africa from Cape Verde to Cape Lopez, which means of course that maize must have reached Africa before Columbus sailed for America. Consequently Mauny's other objection that Periera could not have been

describing haricot beans, another American crop, under the name *feyxôes*, falls away. It is thus apparent how necessary it is to have the original Portuguese text. Mr Mauny has done a good service to scholars in giving the Portuguese text and a French translation. There is also reproduced a remarkably good outline of Africa dated 1502. A misprint occurs on page 8, line 18, *latln* for Latin.

He has also assisted in providing, with Professor Monod and Teixeira da Mota, the Portuguese text and a French translation of Valentim Fernandes's book which was written in 1506, giving a description of the coast of Africa from Senegal to Cape Mount. Both books are essential for all Africanists studying the early history of the West Coasts of Africa.

The Estudos de Guiné Portuguesa are doing a great service to scholarship by publishing early Portuguese documents on Africa.

M. D. W. JEFFREYS